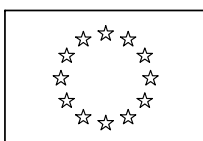


The European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training

ECVET

Get to know ECVET better

Questions and Answers



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Education and Culture

Lifelong learning: Policies and Programme

Professional training; Leonardo da Vinci

This document has been written by Alain Bultot (Ministère de l'enseignement obligatoire, Communauté française – Belgium), Gabriela Ciobanu (National Center for Technical and Vocational Education and Training - Romania), Stefan Eliasson (Elof Lindalus Gymnasium – Sweden), Didier Gélibert (Association Nationale pour la Formation Automobile – France), Angela Lambkin (Further Education and Training Awards Council –Ireland), Isabelle le Mouillour (Cedefop), Richard Maniak (Ministère de l'éducation nationale – France), Jos Noesen (Ministère de l'éducation nationale et de la formation professionnelle – Luxembourg), Peter Thiele and Maria Brosch (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung -Germany), Sabine Tritscher-Archan (Institut für Bisdinsforschung der Wirtschaft – Austria). With the support of GHK Consulting, Brussels (Daniela Uličná, Cécile Mathou). Coordination: Michel Aribaud (European Commission, DG EAC). November 2009.

Introduction to this guide

ECVET is a new European instrument to support lifelong learning, the mobility of European learners and flexibility of learning pathways to achieve qualifications.

Following its adoption by the European Parliament and by the Council (18 June 2009)¹, ECVET is now in a phase of progressive implementation.

ECVET concepts and principles will be tested and introduced to ensure that conditions for the gradual application of ECVET to VET qualifications are in place across Europe by 2012. In this perspective, this guide is designed with the aims to support and encourage projects, initiatives and experimentations in ECVET at European, national and regional levels. It is based on the Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council (in particular its annexes). It enables the stakeholders concerned to become familiar with ECVET. It is the first in a series of documents explaining and presenting ECVET. It will be followed by additional guides written with a specific target audience in mind (e.g. training centres).

Whom is the guide for?

This document is intended for the use of people engaging in the experimentation or in the implementation of ECVET. These can be policy-makers, competent institutions in charge of designing qualifications, VET providers (such as training centres or enterprises) or any other stakeholders.

What can be found in this guide?

This guide explains the key ECVET concepts and processes and provides guidance and illustrations for ECVET implementation. It contains examples of possible approaches experienced in ongoing projects and initiatives.

This guide uses a question-and-answer format. The list of questions, each referring to key aspects of ECVET, can be found on next page. Readers can use the questions to navigate through the guide.

This guide has three parts:

Part A – Contains explanations of key concepts and processes

Part B – Presents the functions of ECVET competent institutions

Part C – Highlights some examples and possible approaches

The text in *italics* denotes that it has been directly abstracted from the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of ECVET.

The examples used in this document are mainly based on ongoing ECVET pilot projects and initiatives. They are intended to illustrate the general explanations in the guide and should be adapted to specific situations when used to inspire further practice.

¹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:155:0011:0018:EN:PDF>

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	What do you mean by ...?
Term	Definition/explanation
Assessment of learning outcomes	Methods and processes used to establish the extent to which a learner has attained particular knowledge, skills and competence.
Competence	The proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities in work or study situations and in professional and personal development.
Competent institution	Institution which is responsible for designing and awarding qualifications or recognising units or other functions linked to ECVET, such as the allocation of ECVET points to qualifications and units, assessment, validation and recognition of learning outcomes under the rules and practices of participating countries.
Credit accumulation	Process through which learners can acquire qualifications progressively by successive assessments of learning outcomes.
Credit for learning outcomes (credit)	Set of learning outcomes of an individual which have been assessed and which can be accumulated towards a qualification or transferred to other learning programmes or qualifications.
Credit transfer	Process through which learning outcomes achieved in one context can be taken into account in another context. Credit transfer is based on the processes of assessment, validation and recognition.
ECVET points	Numerical representation of the overall weight of learning outcomes in a qualification and of the relative weight of units in relation to the qualification.
Knowledge	The outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of work or study.
Learning Agreement	Individualised document which sets out the conditions for a specific mobility period. It specifies, for a particular learner, what learning outcomes s/he should achieve and how they will be assessed, validated and recognised.
Learning outcomes	Statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence.
Learning programme	Inventory of activities, content and/or methods implemented to achieve education or training objectives (acquiring knowledge, skills and/or competences), organised in a logical sequence over a specified period of time.
Memorandum of Understanding	An agreement between competent institutions which sets the framework for credit transfer. It formalises the ECVET partnership by stating the mutual acceptance of the status and procedures of competent institutions involved. It also establishes partnership's procedures for cooperation.

Non-formal and informal learning	<p>Informal learning is learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. Informal learning is in most cases unintentional from the learner's perspective.</p> <p>Nonformal learning is learning which is embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view.</p>
Qualification	Formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent institution determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to a given standard.
(National) qualifications system	All aspects of a Member State's activity related to the recognition of learning and other mechanisms that link education and training to the labour market and civil society. This includes the development and implementation of institutional arrangements and processes relating to quality assurance, assessment and the award of qualifications. A national qualifications system may be composed of several subsystems and may include a national qualifications framework.
Recognition of learning outcomes	The process of attesting officially achieved learning outcomes through the awarding of units or qualifications.
Skills	The ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems.
The Personal Transcript	Document containing information on credit the learner has achieved. It is a record of his/her learning achievements.
Unit of learning outcomes (unit)	Component of a qualification, consisting of a coherent set of knowledge, skills and competence, which can be assessed and validated.
Validation of learning outcomes	The process of confirming that certain assessed learning outcomes achieved by a learner correspond to specific outcomes which may be required for a unit or a qualification.

Part A – Key Concepts and Processes

	Learning Outcomes
What are learning outcomes?	<p><i>Learning outcomes are statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process (see the 2008 Recommendation on the European Qualifications Framework - EQF²). Usually, qualifications frameworks indicate the overall level of learning outcomes in a qualification. For ECVET purposes the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is used as a reference for levels.</i></p> <p>Learning outcomes can be used for various purposes such as to establish descriptors of qualifications frameworks, define qualifications, design curricula, assessment, etc. Learning outcomes are set out in various levels of detail depending on their purpose and context.</p> <p>Learning outcomes are developed in the process of designing qualifications. There are different approaches to identifying and describing learning outcomes depending on the qualifications system. For an illustration see Part C.1.</p> <p>Learning outcomes may be acquired through a variety of learning pathways, modes of delivery (school-based, in-company, etc.), in different learning contexts (formal, non-formal and informal) or settings (i.e. country, education and training system ...).</p>

² <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:111:0001:0007:EN:PDF>

<p>How are learning outcomes described?</p>	<p>Learning outcomes are described using the terminology and descriptors existing in the different qualifications systems.</p> <p>The European definition of learning outcomes which uses the terms of knowledge, skills and competence (see EQF recommendation) is the common denominator that fits with the diversity of approaches to describing learning outcomes.</p> <p>ECVET does not provide a template or a taxonomy concerning the format of learning outcomes descriptions. Such templates or classifications may exist at national, regional or system level (for example as part of a national qualifications framework).</p> <p>However, it is essential in implementing ECVET to ensure that learning outcomes for qualifications and units are clearly identified and described to enable mutual understanding of qualifications and judgments on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Whether the qualifications concerned by the mobility partnership lead to the same or similar occupation; - Whether learning outcomes as described in one setting or context are comparable with those in another setting or context. <p>For further information about the description of units in terms of learning outcomes (see section on Units).</p> <p>For ECVET partnerships it may be useful to devise tools such as grids or templates for describing learning outcomes in order:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to compare qualifications across the different qualifications systems - to highlight the similarities between qualifications and learning outcomes - to make the difference between learning outcomes visible <p>However the use of such tools depends on the needs of the partnerships.</p>
<p>How are learning outcomes used in ECVET?</p>	<p>To implement ECVET it is necessary that qualifications are described using learning outcomes.</p> <p>Learning outcomes are grouped to create units (see section on Units).</p> <p>Assessed learning outcomes constitute credit. Credit is the basis for enabling transfer between learning contexts and for the accumulation of learning outcomes (see section on Credit Transfer and Accumulation).</p> <p>Learning outcomes are used as a basis to identify whether what the learner has achieved in one learning setting or context is comparable to what s/he is expected to have achieved in another setting or context. This is possible because learning outcomes are not dependent on the learning process or the learning context in which they have been achieved.</p>

	Units
<p>What is a unit and how does it relate to a qualification?</p>	<p><i>A unit is a component of a qualification, consisting of a coherent set of knowledge, skills and competence that can be assessed and validated.</i></p> <p>Units enable progressive achievement of qualifications through transfer and accumulation of learning outcomes. They are subject to assessment and validation which verify and record that the learner has achieved the learning outcomes expected.</p> <p>Depending on the existing regulations, units may be common to several qualifications or specific to one particular qualification. Units are accumulated based on the requirements to achieve qualifications. These requirements may be more or less restrictive depending on the tradition and practice of the qualifications system and the way qualification standards are designed.</p> <p>Units can also be used to structure the formal education and training programme (see below).</p>
<p>Why does ECVET require the use of units?</p>	<p>The objective of ECVET is to <i>facilitate the transfer, recognition and accumulation of assessed learning outcomes of individuals who are aiming to achieve a qualification.</i></p> <p>This is possible because each unit is documented and the learning outcomes it contains can be assessed, and validated. Hence learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Progressively accumulate learning outcomes in view of achieving a qualification; - Obtain recognition for their learning outcomes achieved in other contexts without new assessment (i.e. units can be transferred).
<p>How can ECVET be used in a qualifications system that does not use units?</p>	<p>In countries where qualifications are not designed in terms of units or where they do not allow for accumulation of units, it is possible to use ECVET for mobility purposes by creating units used only for mobility. These units can then be transferred. The learning outcomes will be validated by exempting the learner from the corresponding part of the education and training pathway in the home institution (meaning s/he will not have to undergo the learning process again). However, these learning outcomes will only be recognised when the final assessment, leading to the award of the qualification, is successfully completed by the learner.</p>

<p>How can learning outcomes be clustered to create units?</p>	<p>Units should be <i>constructed and organised in a coherent way with regard to the overall qualification.</i></p> <p>To group the learning outcomes into units it is necessary to identify those outcomes that relate to each other. This can be either because they relate to the same set of occupational activities (e.g. reading and implementing plans; maintenance of machines; shampooing and hair treatment; etc.) or the same field of knowledge, skills or competence (e.g. legal aspects related to the occupation; competence in foreign language; etc.).</p> <p>The same learning outcomes should not be assessed twice. Therefore they do not normally form part of different units. However, in some cases it may be necessary to define some knowledge, skills and competence that are related to all or a group of units. For example those concerning health and safety; environmental protection; hygiene; or key competences. Even if these learning outcomes are common or transversal they should be clearly identified in the unit description.</p> <p>For examples on grouping learning outcomes to units see Part C.3.</p>
<p>How should units be described when using ECVET?</p>	<p>Units should be <i>described in legible and understandable terms by referring to the knowledge, skills and competence contained in them.</i></p> <p>Unit descriptions are crucial for the success of ECVET processes because they are the basis for transparency of qualifications. The unit description enables competent institutions and VET providers from different qualifications systems to understand the characteristics of units and of the assessment which has taken place in another context.</p> <p><i>Unit specifications should include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>the generic title of the unit;</i> - <i>the generic title of the qualification (or qualifications) to which the unit relates, where applicable,</i> - <i>the reference of the qualification according to the EQF level and, where appropriate, the national qualifications framework level, with the ECVET credit points associated with the qualification,</i> - <i>the learning outcomes contained in the unit,</i> - <i>the procedures and criteria for assessment of these learning outcomes,</i> - <i>the ECVET points associated with the unit,</i> - <i>the validity in time of the unit, where relevant.</i> <p>If the national standards specify additional requirements or restrictions for units and their description, for example restricted validity in time, these will also be contained in the unit specification.</p> <p>Two examples of units following these criteria can be found in the Part C.5.</p>

<p>Who defines units?</p>	<p>Depending on the institutional structures and the competent institutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In some systems, units are defined as part of the qualification standard. They are hence defined at the central level by competent institutions in charge of developing qualifications (e.g. ministries, sectoral organisations). • In other systems, VET providers may have the responsibility for designing units based on the qualifications standard defined at central level. <p>When using ECVET for mobility, as experimented in the current ECVET pilot projects, units (reference units, common units, ...) are often defined in the framework of networks (national or transnational) by the partners involved. This cooperative approach ensures that units are suitable for the purpose of transfer from one system to another.</p>
<p>What is the link between units and formal education and training programmes?</p>	<p>As defined above, units are components of qualifications. Therefore units determine the content and possibly the structure of the programme. However, for the same qualification, different education and training programmes may exist.</p> <p>An education or training programme is composed of different learning activities such as modules, placements, courses etc to which a curriculum is related (learning objectives, content, assessment methods and material etc). The programme therefore structures the way the learning activities are organised. The relationships between units and these sets of learning activities depend on the qualifications system. For example a set of learning activities could correspond to one unit, a number of units or even part of a unit.</p> <p>In some systems, programmes are designed so they lead to the progressive acquisition of units. In others the units are only achieved after the whole learning programme has been completed and it is only then that the learner is assessed. Intermediary situations also exist, where continuing assessment is combined with a final assessment.</p>
<p>Is there an 'ideal' size for a unit?</p>	<p>There is no ideal size for a unit.</p> <p>Some systems use units that are relatively small in size. This means that they combine a small number of learning outcomes.</p> <p>Advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • units can be obtained in a rather short time of learning and therefore are particularly suitable for geographical mobility. • they can also be suitable for adult learners who combine learning and employment or learners who are at risk of dropping out from longer programmes.

Disadvantages:

- because of the greater number of units in a qualification, this approach implies putting in place a large number of assessments.
- fragmentation of qualifications and of assessment may make it more difficult to identify whether the learner can combine all the knowledge, skills and competence in a more complex manner.

Other systems conceive units as large sets of learning outcomes and typically qualifications would only contain a relatively small number of units.

Advantages:

- assessment of a larger unit enables learners to demonstrate their capacity to combine knowledge, skills and competence in view of delivering a more complex service or a product.
- the number of summative assessments is small.

Disadvantages:

- more substantial amount of learning activities is required to prepare for a unit. Hence it may be difficult to achieve a full unit in the context of short transnational mobility period.
- the duration of learning activities preparing for the unit may be too substantial for learners outside initial VET to be able to benefit from accumulation.

The size of units will therefore depend on the practice in the qualifications system and also on the purpose of the unit. For example units that are designed to be meaningful on the labour market (for example as partial qualifications) are likely to be large. On the other hand if units are designed specifically for mobility purposes or if they are designed for specific target groups such as adults they may be smaller.

How are units used in the framework of ECVET partnerships for mobility?

In order to be able to transfer credit achieved in different contexts, the competent institutions agree that the learning outcomes of a unit and the assessment standards in the host setting are comparable to those of a unit in the home setting.

For an example of how qualifications can be compared by using key occupational activities see Part C.2.

When using ECVET for mobility as experimented in the current ECVET pilot projects, partnerships have developed several approaches to identifying comparability of learning outcomes in units across the different countries/systems. These approaches can be grouped as follows:

- identifying comparable units
- designing units 'open to mobility'
- creating 'reference units'
- designing common units

These approaches are further explained and described through examples in Part C.4.

	ECVET points
What are ECVET points?	<p><i>ECVET points are a numerical representation of the overall weight of learning outcomes in a qualification and of the relative weight of units in relation to the qualification.</i></p> <p>Together with units, descriptions of learning outcomes, information about the level of qualifications, ECVET points can support the understanding of a qualification. The number of ECVET points allocated to a qualification, together with other specifications, can indicate for example, that the scope of the qualification is narrow or broad.</p> <p>The number of ECVET points allocated to a unit provides the learner with information concerning the relative weight of what s/he has accumulated already. It also provides the learner with information concerning what remains to be achieved.</p>
How many ECVET points are allocated to a qualification and how is it done?	<p><i>Allocation of ECVET points to a qualification is based on using a convention according to which 60 points are allocated to the learning outcomes expected to be achieved in a year of formal full time VET.</i></p> <p>For a given qualification, one formal learning context is taken as a reference and, on the basis of 60 points per year of formal full time VET, the total number of points is assigned to that qualification.</p> <p>In a number of European countries qualifications' descriptions are independent of the education and training programme preparing for these qualifications. Furthermore it is also possible that the same qualification can be prepared through various programmes. Therefore ECVET allocates points to qualifications and not to education and training programmes. However, to decide on the number of ECVET points' allocated to a qualification, one formal learning programme is chosen as a point of reference. It is up to the competent institutions in charge of designing qualifications to decide which specific programme will be chosen as a point of reference (for example the initial VET or the most common programme). The duration of the selected reference programme together with the ECVET convention on ECVET points will give the number of ECVET points allocated to the qualification (see Part C.6).</p>

How many ECVET points are allocated to units and how is this done?

From the total number of points allocated to a qualification each unit is allocated a number of points based on its relative weight within the qualification. The relative weight of a unit is established using one or a combination of these approaches:

- *the relative importance of the learning outcomes which constitute the unit for labour market participation, for progression to other qualification levels or for social integration;*

This method of allocating ECVET points is based on how different actors “value” the different units which are part of the qualification. For example some units may be core to the professional profile that the qualification leads to. It can be decided that such core units would have a higher number of ECVET points than the others. It is also possible that some units would enable progression to other qualifications levels (e.g. general knowledge, skills and competence to enable progression to higher education).

- *the complexity, scope and volume of learning outcomes in the unit;*

This approach is based on evaluating the complexity, scope and volume of knowledge, skills and competence in a unit with regard to those in the qualification. It can be based on indicators such as the level of performance for assessment of learning outcomes. For example: the body of technical, technological, scientific and general knowledge that have to be mobilized in order to execute the skills and competences expected; the number of procedures or methods to follow, the complexity of combinations of these procedures or methods; the variety and complexity of material and documentation resources to use.

- *the effort necessary for a learner to acquire the knowledge, skills and competence required for the unit.*

This method of allocating ECVET points is based on the training programme taken as a point of reference and on the estimation of learners’ effort (which can be also translated as workload or notional learning time) to achieve the expected learning outcomes.

Examples of approaches to allocate points to units are described in Part C.7.

<p>Who allocates ECVET points?</p>	<p><i>Allocation of ECVET points is normally part of the design of qualifications and units. The allocation of ECVET points to qualifications and/or to units is carried out by the institution competent for the design of qualifications or the institution empowered to allocate ECVET points within a country or a qualifications system.</i></p> <p>In the context of the current ECVET pilot projects, the range of institutions experimenting ECVET points allocation is wide and ranges from ministries, sectoral organisations or social partners to training centres.</p>
<p>When and how are learners awarded ECVET points?</p>	<p><i>The successful achievement of a qualification or of a unit triggers the award of the associated ECVET points, independently of the actual time required to achieve them.</i></p> <p>Hence when a learner satisfies the criteria for a unit or a qualification, meaning s/he has achieved the expected learning outcomes and these are assessed and validated, s/he is awarded the corresponding ECVET points. These are recorded, together with the learning outcomes and units, in his/her personal transcript.</p>
<p>What is the role of ECVET points in the transfer and accumulation process?</p>	<p><i>Usually the transfer of a unit entails the transfer of the corresponding ECVET points so that they are included when the transferred learning outcomes are recognised, in acceptance with national or regional rules. It is up to the competent institution to reconsider, where necessary, the ECVET points to be taken into account, as long as the rules and methodologies which are laid down for this purpose are transparent and underpinned by quality assurance principles.</i></p> <p>In line with the ECVET Recommendation (see above) and as presented in the section on Credit Transfer and Accumulation, the transfer of credit concerns the validation and recognition of learning outcomes assessed in a different context. The transcription of ECVET points in personal transcripts' accompanies this process but ECVET points are not the subject of credit transfer. Similarly the process of accumulation concerns the assessed and validated learning outcomes and not the ECVET points.</p> <p>ECVET points contribute to informing the institution in charge of transferring learning outcomes and their recognition about the relative weight of the units/qualification the learner has already achieved (especially when transfer is taking place outside the context of recognised mobility).</p> <p>In practice, when learners' credit is transferred and accumulated the number of ECVET points, together with the unit specifications and information on the learning outcomes are recorded in the personal transcript.</p>

<p>How are ECVET points used for transfer and accumulation in systems which already use credit points?</p>	<p>In countries where there is already a national system of points, the relevant competent institutions establish arrangements for the conversion of national credit points to ECVET points.</p>
<p>What is the difference between ECVET points and credit?</p>	<p>ECVET points are not to be confused with credit. While credit designates the learning outcomes the learner has achieved (see section below on Credit Transfer and Accumulation), ECVET points provide information about the qualification and the units. Credit is transferred and accumulated. ECVET points provide information about the credit the learner has transferred and accumulated.</p>

Credit Transfer and Accumulation	
What is credit?	<p>Credit for learning outcomes (i.e. credit) designates <i>individuals' learning outcomes which have been assessed and which can be accumulated towards a qualification or transferred to other learning programmes or qualifications.</i></p> <p>Credit refers to the fact that the learner has achieved the expected learning outcomes which have been assessed positively and the outcome of the assessment was documented in a personal transcript. Based on this documentation, other institutions can recognise the credit.</p>
What is credit transfer?	<p>Credit transfer is the process through which learning outcomes achieved in one context can be taken into account in another context. Credit transfer is based on the processes of assessment, validation and recognition.</p> <p>In order to be transferred, learning outcomes have to be assessed. The outcome of the assessment is recorded in the learners' personal transcript and constitutes credit. On the basis of the assessed outcomes the credit can be validated and recognised by another competent institution.</p> <p>Two cases of credit transfer exist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transfer in the framework of partnerships - Transfer outside partnerships <p>These are further explained below.</p>
What is credit accumulation?	<p>Credit accumulation is a process through which learners can acquire qualifications progressively by successive assessments and validation of learning outcomes.</p> <p>In ECVET accumulation is enabled by the use of units of learning outcomes that can be progressively assessed, validated and recognised. It is based on qualification systems' rules and requirements on accumulation. These rules define which learning outcomes are accumulated towards which qualification and how they are assessed and validated.</p> <p>When the credit transfer takes place in the framework of organised mobility, underpinned by a Learning agreement, credit should be validated and recognised automatically.</p> <p>Accumulation of credit is decided by the competent institution responsible for the award of the qualification. When the learner has accumulated the credit required and when all the conditions for the award of the qualification are fulfilled, the learner is awarded the qualification.</p>

<p>How is credit transfer organised in the framework of ECVET partnerships?</p>	<p>In the framework of ECVET partnerships, credit transfer is foreseen in the Learning agreement (see section Learning Agreement). This agreement specifies which learning outcomes are to be achieved during the mobility and how these will be assessed.</p> <p>If the learner has been positively assessed by the hosting institution it implies that the learning outcomes expected for units concerned have been achieved. This is recorded in the learners' personal transcript. The home institution validates and automatically recognises the learner's credit, as specified in the Learning agreement.</p> <p>In the case of learning outcomes achieved in other settings and contexts and that are only corresponding to part of the unit in the home system, it is possible to validate and recognise the assessment results as part of the continuing assessment (if it exists). In any case, the learner should be exempted from part of the programme that corresponds to the learning outcomes concerned.</p>
<p>What is meant by a home institution and a hosting institution?</p>	<p><i>The "home" institution is the institution which will validate and recognise learning outcomes achieved by the learner.</i> In the context of ECVET partnerships it is the home institution that sends the learner out and where the learner comes back to.</p> <p><i>The "hosting" institution is the one that delivers training for the learning outcomes concerned and assesses the achieved learning outcomes.</i> In the context of ECVET partnerships it is the hosting institution that receives the mobile learner and provides learning activities (modules, courses, placements etc), as well as assessment.</p> <p>In practice, the functions of the hosting institution may be shared by more than one organisation: the competence to provide learning activities and that to assess learners' achievement may be executed by different organisations. Similarly the functions of the home institution such as validation and recognition may be shared by more than one organisation.</p> <p>All relevant information on the home and hosting institutions should be presented in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).</p> <p>See Part B on Competent institutions and ECVET functions.</p>
<p>Who organises the assessment of learning outcomes?</p>	<p>The hosting institution organises the assessment of learning outcomes as specified in the Learning agreement. The assessment can be done by teachers, trainers, employers, etc. depending on the training and assessment arrangements and procedures that are used in the host context.</p>

<p>Where are the assessment requirements described?</p>	<p>Prior to the mobility period the partners discuss and agree the way(s) in which learning outcomes will be assessed during the mobility period. They also agree on who and how the quality of this process is ensured.</p> <p>The requirements on assessment are described in the Learning agreement and may be formalised in a MoU (see sections on Learning Agreement and MoU).</p>
<p>Who validates the assessed learning outcomes?</p>	<p>The home institution validates the learning outcomes assessed by the hosting institution.</p> <p>Concerning the validation of formal, non-formal or informal learning, outside a partnership, it is the competent institution which is empowered to award qualifications or units or to give credit that validates (possibly after organising an assessment) the learning outcomes of a learner.</p> <p>The partnership should ensure that learners who are assessed in another context and whose credit is transferred are not disadvantaged compared to other learners in the home system. If, for example, the home system uses grades for condoning, the partnership should find a way to ensure that the mobile learner will receive grades that correspond to his/her performance.</p>
<p>How is credit transfer organised outside the framework of ECVET partnerships?</p>	<p><i>For applying ECVET to learning outcomes achieved in a non-formal and informal learning context or outside the framework of an MoU [Memorandum of Understanding], the competent institution which is empowered to award qualifications or units or to give credit should establish procedures and mechanisms for the identification, validation and recognition of these learning outcomes through the award of the corresponding units and the associated ECVET points.</i></p> <p>Outside the framework of partnerships, no learning agreement exists. Therefore the decision on recognition lies fully in the hands of the competent institution in the system in which the learner wants his/her credit recognised. This institution should examine whether the learning outcomes the learner has achieved and which were assessed (as possibly documented in the personal transcript) are comparable to the requirements of their system (for example, are they comparable to the qualification standards?). If so, the competent institution may decide to validate and recognise learners' credit.</p> <p>In cases where learning outcomes have not been previously assessed, the competent institution may ask the learner to undergo a procedure for validation and recognition of formal, non-formal and informal learning.</p>

	ECVET and non-formal and informal learning
<i>Is ECVET applicable to non-formal and informal learning?</i>	<p>Yes, the Recommendation states that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>ECVET facilitates the development of flexible and individualised pathways and also the recognition of those learning outcomes which are acquired through non-formal and informal learning.</i> • <i>For applying ECVET to learning outcomes achieved in a non-formal and informal learning context or outside the framework of an MoU, the competent institution which is empowered to award qualifications or units or to give credit should establish procedures and mechanisms for the identification, validation and recognition of these learning outcomes through the award of the corresponding units and the associated ECVET points.</i>
How does ECVET facilitate validation of non-formal and informal learning?	<p>The validation process for non-formal and informal learning in view of achieving a qualification typically follows these phases³:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of knowledge, skills and competences developed during personal activities, while living in a community or working, etc. • Documentation of these learning outcomes through the collection of evidence such as descriptions of previous working activities, etc. • Assessment of these learning outcomes against standards, referential or list of expected learning outcomes. • Award of a qualification or part of a qualification. <p>ECVET facilitates this process because it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes the knowledge, skills and competence required for a qualification and the associated units. This makes it easier for the competent institution to identify what learners' have already achieved as compared to what is required in view of a qualification. • Supports progressive achievement of qualifications by accumulation of units and through transfer and recognition of learning outcomes. • Facilitates the documentation of learning outcomes achieved through the use of tools such as personal transcripts. <p>ECVET therefore enables learners to achieve qualifications partly by having non-formal and informal learning validated and recognised and by achieving the remaining units through formal learning.</p>

³ http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Upload/Information_resources/Bookshop/553/4054_en.pdf

	Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)
What is a Memorandum of Understanding?	A MoU is an agreement between competent institutions which sets the framework for credit transfer. It formalises the ECVET partnership by stating the mutual acceptance of the status and procedures of competent institutions involved. It also establishes partnership's procedures for cooperation.
Why is a Memorandum of Understanding needed?	<p>Credit transfer is supported by mutual trust between the competent institutions involved. As stated in the ECVET Recommendation, this should be promoted by establishing MoUs.</p> <p>In order to recognise credit, the competent institution in charge needs to be confident that the required learning outcomes have been assessed in a reliable and valid manner. It also needs to trust that learners' credit does concern the learning outcomes expected and that these are at the appropriate level.</p> <p>By setting up a MoU, competent institutions should acknowledge their partners' approaches to designing units, assessment, validation, recognition as well as quality assurance. Through this process, they make informed judgements about the conditions under which they can recognise credit achieved in partner systems.</p>
Who concludes a Memorandum of Understanding?	<p>MoUs are concluded by <i>competent institutions, each of which is empowered, in their own setting, to award qualifications or units or to give credit for achieved learning outcomes for transfer and validation.</i></p> <p>It is important to note that one institution can be competent for more than one function in the qualifications system as well as in ECVET, depending on the set up of the particular qualification system. These may be ministries, qualifications authorities, regional authorities, employers' representatives or chambers, etc.</p>

<p>What does a MoU contain?</p>	<p>A MoU contains statements through which the parties concerned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>accept each other's status as competent institutions,</i> - <i>accept each other's quality assurance, assessment, validation and recognition criteria and procedures as satisfactory for the purposes of credit transfer,</i> <p>This agreement is based on transparency of information concerning the above processes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>agree the conditions for the operation of the partnership, such as objectives, duration and arrangements for review of the MoU,</i> <p>Such conditions will depend on the purposes and the context of partnerships.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>agree on the comparability of qualifications concerned for the purposes of credit transfer, using the reference levels established by EQF,</i> <p>The level of detail regarding this point will vary depending on the partnership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>identify other actors and competent institutions that may be involved in the process concerned and their functions.</i> <p>MoUs define the roles of other competent institutions with regard to functions such as signature of learning agreements, assessment, issuing of learners' personal transcript, etc.</p>
<p>Is there a template for a MoU?</p>	<p>There is no common template for a MoU.</p> <p>Competent institutions may decide on the format and structure best suited for their needs as long as they respect the guidelines described above.</p> <p>Examples of MoUs will be developed as part of the work of ECVET pilot projects.</p>
<p>How can ECVET be used outside a MoU?</p>	<p>Establishment of MoUs is recommended for cases of organised mobility. However, if the institutions concerned (e.g. VET providers) already have trust in each others' procedures and they are competent to recognise credit without the agreement of another institution (e.g. ministry, employers' representatives or regional authority), they can put in place exchanges directly using the Learning agreement.</p> <p>Thus, it is possible to transfer credit without establishing a MoU. This may also concern ad-hoc cases of learners who have not participated in an organised mobility but want to have their learning outcomes recognised. In such cases the competent institution <i>should establish procedures and mechanisms for the identification, validation and recognition of learning outcomes</i> concerned. For more information see section on ECVET and non-formal and informal learning.</p>

	Learning Agreement
What is a Learning agreement?	<p>A Learning agreement is an individualised document which sets out the conditions for a specific mobility period. It specifies, for a particular learner, which learning outcomes and units should be achieved together with the associated ECVET points.</p> <p>The Learning agreement also <i>lays down that, if the learner achieves the expected learning outcomes and these are positively assessed by the "hosting" institution, the "home" institution will validate and recognise them as part of the requirements for a qualification.</i> Therefore the Learning agreement constitutes a commitment to the learner that his/her achievement, if in line with the expectations, will be recognised.</p>
Why is a Learning agreement needed?	<p>Recognition of credit achieved during organised mobility is facilitated by the use of Learning agreements. These ensure that the hosting and the home institutions as well as the learner have information about the objectives and conditions of the mobility period as well as their roles. Compliance with the Learning agreement enables automatic recognition of credit on learner's return. This is done without additional assessment or examination of the mobility period content.</p>
Who signs the Learning agreement?	<p>The Learning agreement is always signed by these parties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The home institution (<i>the institution which will validate and recognise learning outcomes achieved by the learner</i>) - The hosting institution (<i>that delivers training for the learning outcomes concerned and assesses the achieved learning outcomes</i>) - The learner.
What does the Learning agreement contain?	<p>The Learning agreement contains information concerning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The identity of the learner - Duration of the mobility period - Learning outcomes to be achieved by the learner and the associated ECVET points (as corresponding to the relative weight of the unit in the home system) <p>Additional information, for example in relation to assessment, learning activities may be provided.</p> <p>Examples of Learning agreements will be developed as part of the work of ECVET pilot projects. A suggestion for the structure of a Learning agreement can be found in Part C.8.</p>

What is the difference between a Learning agreement and a MoU?	<p>The MoU is a framework document that defines the conditions under which credit achieved in partner systems can be recognised. It can concern a group or even a large number of qualifications.</p> <p>The Learning agreement is a more specific document. It is written for a particular case of mobility and describes the learning outcomes concerned as well as how these will be assessed.</p>
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	Personal Transcript
What is a Personal transcript?	<p>The Personal transcript is a record of learning achievements. It contains information on <i>learners' assessed learning outcomes, units and ECVET points awarded</i>. It also specifies the identity of the learner and the competent institution(s) that assessed, validated and recognised learners' credit.</p> <p>A suggestion for a format of a personal transcript can be found in Part C.9.</p>
Who keeps the personal transcript?	The personal transcript is a document that belongs to the learner.
How does it differ from a Learning agreement?	While the Learning agreement describes what the learner is expected to achieve, the personal transcript documents what s/he has achieved.

Part B – Functions of ECVET Competent Institutions

	ECVET Competent Institutions
<p>Who are the competent institutions involved in ECVET?</p>	<p><i>“Competent institution” means an institution which is responsible for designing and awarding qualifications or recognising units or other functions linked to ECVET, such as allocation of ECVET points to qualifications and units, assessment, validation and recognition of learning outcomes, under the rules and practices of participating countries.</i></p> <p>The main challenge for the introduction of a common methodological framework like ECVET in the European VET environment is the broad range of bodies involved with the different functions of qualifications systems. Depending on the system, the same function (e.g. design of qualifications and of units) may be the responsibility of different types of actors (e.g. national or regional ministries, social partners, VET providers).</p> <p>To overcome this complexity, ECVET refers to the different functions of a qualifications system rather than to the types of institutions involved. Institutions involved in implementing and running ECVET are referred to as competent institutions.</p> <p>Users of ECVET therefore need to first clarify their role(s) with regard to their own qualifications system. They have to reflect on their competences in their qualifications system and how these relate to the main functions of ECVET. The functions of ECVET and how these relate to the responsibilities in the qualifications system are described in the table below.</p> <p>It is important to note that one institution can be competent for more than one function in the qualifications system as well as in ECVET, depending on the set up of the particular qualifications system.</p>

ECVET and the various functions in VET qualifications systems and VET provision

Quality assurance	Realisation functions				Conception functions			Quality assurance
Quality assurance and regulation	Certification/recognition of learning outcomes (including the award of qualification, certificate, diploma...)	Validation of learning outcomes (formal, non-formal and informal)	Assessment of learning outcomes (formal, non-formal and informal)	Carrying out the formal or non-formal programme	Design of formal or non-formal programmes	Design of qualifications	Design of assessment/validation procedures	Quality assurance
ECVET functions								
Use of ECVET for accumulation and Transfer								
<p>Recognition of learning outcomes and process for taking credit into account for the award of qualification (i.e. transfer and accumulation)</p> <p>Recording of assessed learning outcomes and credit in the personal transcript</p> <p>Validation of learning outcomes and of corresponding credit</p> <p>Establishment of Learning agreements</p> <p>Assessment of learning outcomes and award of corresponding credit</p> <p>Practical use of learning outcomes and credit for mobility</p>								
Design of ECVET elements								
<p>Description of qualifications in terms of units of learning outcomes</p> <p>Allocation of ECVET points to qualifications and to units</p> <p>Link between units of learning outcomes and the formal or non-formal programme</p> <p>Link between assessment/validation processes, the achievement of units of learning outcomes and award of associated ECVET points</p>								
Establishment of Memoranda of Understanding (all actors may be involved in establishment of a MoU directly or by delegation)								
Provision of Information, its Documentation and Communication								

	Examples of how ECVET functions are covered by competent institutions involved in ECVET pilot projects
ECVET Asset	<p>The project ECVET ASSET brings together, as main partners, VET training centres in the automobile sector.</p> <p>With regard to the ECVET functions presented in the table above, these training centres are mainly responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carrying out the formal programme, - Assessment of learning outcomes; - In some of the partner countries (e.g. Finland) they are also responsible for the validation and recognition of learning outcomes; - In other partner countries (e.g. France or Romania), validation and recognition also involves other competent institutions such as validation juries in France or external examination centres in Romania. <p>In all partner countries the training centres are not responsible for the design of qualifications or units. They may be partially responsible for the design of programmes and assessment and validation procedures. The overall responsibility for the conception function is in the hands of national institutions (e.g. ministries, national VET institutes, or the representatives of the sector).</p> <p>The approach of the ECVET ASSET project is therefore to closely associate the institutions competent for the conception functions to the ECVET testing project. These competent institutions validate the unit descriptions made by the training centres. They also set up the MoU through which they create the overall framework for mobility and credit transfer. The validation and the MoU engagement guarantee that when learners achieve the units abroad the training centres (possibly jointly with other institutions concerned) will be able to validate and recognise their credit.</p> <p>For more information see: http://www.ecvet-projects.eu/Projects/ProjectDetail.aspx?id=9</p>

SME Master Plus

The SME Master Plus project has four main partners from the Chambers of Skilled Crafts in the participating countries.

Depending on the country and the qualifications system the Chambers are responsible for the conception functions but also for elements of the realisation function, namely:

- Design of qualifications, training programmes and assessment and validation processes (e.g. in the dual system in Germany or concerning the sectoral qualifications in France);
- Assessment and validation of learning outcomes (also the case in the dual system in Germany);
- In other systems the assessment and validation may be the role of training centres (e.g. in the Netherlands).

The Chambers are typically not delivering the training themselves but this is done by training centres.

To ensure that the instruments (units, MoU and Learning agreements) designed by the Chambers are suitable for mobility, the SME Master Plus project closely associates a network of training centres. These will test and provide feedback on the unit descriptions as well as the conditions for mobility set up in MoU and Learning agreements.

For more information see: <http://www.ecvet-projects.eu/Projects/ProjectDetail.aspx?id=10>

Part C – Examples and illustrations

Caveat

The examples presented in Part C of this document are based on ongoing projects. At this stage of project development these approaches have not been fully tested and evaluated. They should be considered as illustrations and possible sources of inspiration for other initiatives and projects. In any case the approaches should be adapted to the needs of specific contexts or partnerships.

Examples and illustrations presented here are by no means meant to represent an exhaustive inventory of approaches to implement ECVET.

More examples will soon be available on: www.ecvet-projects.eu

1. Describing qualifications using learning outcomes

Depending on the qualifications system, different methods and approaches to identify and describe learning outcomes are used. Learning outcomes are also used for different purposes (qualifications, programmes, assessment). These differences are illustrated below.

Examples of how learning outcomes are used to design qualification in a selection of EU countries

The Netherlands	
	<p>The Advisory Committee for Education and Labour Market in the Netherlands published a proposal in 1999 entitled <i>Shift to core competences</i> in response to the employers' argument that the skills required for work are better obtained through work rather than formal education. Detailed competence profiles have been defined for 291 occupations, specifying in each case a broad job description and vocational competences with associated success criteria divided into core functional or technical tasks and core behaviour. These are further subdivided into specific competences associated with the job, some of which are a hybrid of functional and behavioural aspects. Each job competence is classed as having one or more of the following 'dimensions':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- the profession-specific method or process dimension refers to professional competences such as techniques with which to carry out core functions and core tasks in an appropriate manner;- the administrative-organisational and strategic dimensions refer to professional competences directed at professional functioning in the context of work organisations; the social-communicative dimension refers to professional competences directed at establishing and maintaining contacts, cooperation, teamwork, etc.;- the development dimension refers to professional competences that contribute to the development of an individual, team, occupation, organisation or business.

France	
	<p>Vocational qualifications in France are created or revised by vocational consultative commissions (CPC), which have now been established in all Ministries that issue qualifications. They differ slightly from one Ministry to another but always bring together: representatives of the Ministry, employers, employees and special experts. These are the main stages through which learning outcomes are formulated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Needs analysis: A needs analysis which can be requested by any of the stakeholders takes into account: the evolution of the branch, recruitment patterns of the industry involved, the prospects which the qualification offers, the different modes of learning best suited to it, and the relevance of the request in relation to existing diplomas. - Occupational standard: This involves the 'construction of the identity of the qualification'. This standard is defined according to the competences required to exercise the profession and involves substantial input from the professionals. - Standards of competence: This stage involves interpreting professional activities into competences to be acquired (knowledge and skills). The role of teachers is essential here. - Assessment standards: This phase is under the responsibility of the competent Ministry. The examination regulations (contents, length, weighting of the subjects), any prerequisites for the qualification, and the number of teaching hours are defined.
Lithuania	
	<p>Two kinds of standards are defined for VET: occupational standards and VET standards. Occupational standards are defined as the description of qualifications and competences needed for acquiring a qualification as well as assessment criteria and methods. VET standards are defined as the regulation of qualifications acquisition in the VET system. They comprise of the following nine parts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - general occupational description; - occupational purpose; - areas of activity; - competences and their limits; - training objectives; - assessment of competences; - basic skills; - final assessment of qualification. -

Source: Cedefop (2009): *The shift to learning outcomes*. P.73; 76;78

2. Use of key activities for comparing qualifications

In order to enable transfer of credit, partner institutions need to identify whether the learning outcomes from one system are suitable/ acceptable for the other system. This is a condition for the recognition of credit.

A first step in this comparison is to identify whether the qualifications concerned are similar. This is done by looking at their level (using EQF), the occupation these qualifications lead to and the learning outcomes of the qualification.

The example below presents an approach where the partner institutions identify similarities and differences across qualifications based on the following steps:

1. by reading the learning outcomes of the qualifications concerned, the key activities for the specific profession/occupation are identified;
2. the different qualifications from the partner systems are then mapped against these key activities enabling identification of commonalities.

Key activities for the occupation of Hairdresser (OPIR ECVET pilot project)

Key activities common to all project partners	
<p>These key activities were identified by a team of experts who have in depth knowledge of the national qualifications concerning this occupation in their own system. Some key activities can be identified in all the qualifications within the partnership while others are specific to one or a few qualifications. The key activities numbered 1 to 8 are common to all qualifications concerned.</p>	
1	<p>Make shampooing and hair treatment (diagnose the hair and scalp type, select appropriate products for the hair and scalp type and the technique that will follow)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Prepare and clean up the workstation</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Employ hygiene, security, environmental protection and ergonomics techniques</i></p>
2	<p>Make simple (basic) hair cuts for men and women</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Prepare and clean up the workstation</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Employ hygiene, security, environmental protection and ergonomics techniques</i></p>
3	<p>Make temporary hair styles (brushing, hair dry, etc.) for women and men</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Prepare and clean up the workstation</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Employ hygiene, security, environmental protection and ergonomics techniques</i></p>
4	<p>Make permanent hair styles :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - perm, water perm, ... <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Prepare and clean up the workstation</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Employ hygiene, security, environmental protection and ergonomics techniques</i></p>

5	Dye, decolour, make highlights : - mix, apply, rinse products... <i>Prepare and clean up the workstation</i> <i>Employ hygiene, security, environmental protection and ergonomics techniques</i>							
7	Communicate with the client							
8	Organise the work and planning							
Key activities specific to certain countries in the partnership								
		ES – Andalusia	ES - Catalonia	BE – French Speaking Community	IT – Lombardy	RO	FR	CH – French Speaking region
9	Make beard and moustache treatments and cuts							
10	Suggest a hair cut appropriate for the style of the client and provide advice on services <i>Note: this activity is exercised but not assessed in some systems</i>							

Source: Opir (ECVET pilot project)

After identifying which key activities were common to the qualifications in the partner countries, these were described in terms of learning outcomes. The learning outcomes for the key activity 'Make temporary hair styles (brushing, hair dry, etc.) for women and men' are presented in below.

Learning Outcomes description for the key activity - Making Temporary Hair Styles (OPIR)

Knowledge	Skills	Competence
<p>C.1.S.1. Hair properties (tensile strength, elasticity, porosity, reaction to water, electrical properties,...).</p> <p>C.1.S.2. Types of hair cuts in relation to the morphology and hair types</p> <p>C.1.S.3. Techniques of hair styles: straighten, curl, brushing, etc.</p>	<p>C.1.A.1 Identify hair properties.</p> <p>C.1.A.2. Suggest and adapted hair style to the client.</p> <p>C.1.A.3. Choose the hair style technique in line with the chosen hair cut.</p>	<p>C.1. In an autonomous and responsible manner, advice the client in order to agree an adapted hair cut.</p> <p>Advice a new or established client in a responsible and autonomous manner in order to agree an adapted hairstyle taking into account her wishes or characteristics.</p>
<p>C.2.S.1. Criteria for positioning of a client (adapted and comfortable).</p> <p>C.2.S.2. Protection equipment (apron, cape...).</p>	<p>C.2.A.1. Position the client.</p> <p>C.2.A.2. Choose the protection equipment for the client.</p> <p>C.2.A.3. Place the protection equipment for the client.</p>	<p>C.2. Appropriately prepare the client for the realisation of the hair style, taking into account hygiene, health and safety rules and procedures.</p> <p>Taking into account the agreed hairstyle, select the techniques necessary for its realisation.</p>
<p>C.3.S.1. Protection elements for the hairdresser.</p> <p>C.3.S.2. Instruments (brushes, combs, hair grips...).</p> <p>C.3.S.3. Devices (hair dryer, curling iron, straightening iron,...).</p> <p>C.3.S.4. Controls necessary to ensure the good functioning of devices.</p> <p>C.3.S.5. Organisation of the work place.</p> <p>C.3.S.6. Hygiene rules (disinfection of devices...) and security rules for the client and the hairdresser.</p>	<p>C.3.A.1 Protect the hairdresser</p> <p>C.3.A.2. Select the necessary tools and devices.</p> <p>C.3.A.3. Verify the functioning of the devices.</p> <p>C.3.A.4. Dispose the products and the devices at the work place.</p>	<p>C.3. Undertake the preparation necessary for the chosen hair style, the devices, materials, products, respecting the hygiene, health and safety rules</p> <p>Appropriately prepare the client for the realisation of the hairstyle, taking into account the security, hygiene and protection measures, with full autonomy.</p>

<p>C. 4-5.S.1. Hair style techniques: hair straightening, hair curling, brushing, ...</p> <p>C. 4-5.S.2. Hair drying techniques: manual hair dryer, helmet hair dryer, ...</p> <p>C. 4-5.S.3. Brushing techniques: using combs, brushes, hands.</p> <p>C. 4-5.S.4. Quality criteria for a good hair style.</p> <p>C. 4-5.S.5. Repairing the volume according to the morphology.</p> <p>C. 4-5.S.6. Brushing and finishing products.</p> <p>C. 4-5.S.7. Notions of ergonomics for the hairdresser (position, operating devices...).</p>	<p>C.4-5.A.1. Use the instruments and devices.</p> <p>C. 4-5.A.2. Put the hair in the form according to the chosen technique (straighten, curl, brush...).</p> <p>C. 4-5.A.3. Dry the hair.</p> <p>C. 4-5A.4. Realise the hair style.</p> <p>C. 4-5.A.5. Choose the hairdressing and finishing products.</p> <p>C. 4-5.A.6. Apply these products.</p> <p>C. 4-5.A.7. Apply hygiene and security rules.</p> <p>C. 4-5.A.8. Adopt ergonomic attitudes.</p>	<p>C.4. Apply the necessary techniques corresponding to the hair form, the client expectations, hair type and the state of the hair, morphological characteristics and the chosen haircut.</p> <p>Autonomously carry out the preparation for the agreed hairstyle, the tools, materials and products respecting the security, hygiene and protection measures, with full autonomy.</p> <p>C.5. Use the most adequate devices and products applying the appropriate ergonomic positions.</p> <p>Autonomously realise the hairstyle using the adapted techniques, material and products adapted to the agreed hairstyle.</p>
<p>C.6.S.1. Advice to the client: maintenance of the hair style at home.</p>	<p>C.6.A.1. Advice the client for follow-up at home.</p>	<p>C.6. Advice the products and treatments to be used in order to favour or maintain the results.</p> <p>Autonomously advice the practices and the products in order to maintain the obtained hairstyle.</p>

Source: OPIR (translated from French)

3. Clustering learning outcomes into units

3.1. Key activities approach (Cominter)

One approach to clustering learning outcomes to units is by grouping them according to the **key activities** of the job profile to which they contribute (see also the example from the OPIR project). For example the Cominter project (see www.recomfor.eu) identified that the occupation of **Import and Export Sales assistant** can be described through five key activities which are:

- Carrying out studies and business monitoring
- Export selling
- Import buying
- Coordinating services for successful import buying and export selling
- Managing relations and contacts in different contexts and cultures
-

These activities can be further subdivided into tasks. For example for the activity *carrying out studies and business monitoring* has these core tasks:

- Permanent market monitoring
- Collecting information abroad
- Preparing decision making
-

Based on these occupational activities and tasks, the project described the following qualification units (and sub-units). The units are clearly related to the key activities. The sub-units refer to distinct working methods, activities or products that form the activity.

Each unit describes the learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills and competence necessary to carry out the activities at the level of a graduate recruit (not an experienced professional).

Units	Sub-Units
International Marketing	Market research and market planning on foreign markets
	Business information system
Export Selling	Prospecting and customer/partner follow up
	Negotiating
Import Buying	Identifying potential suppliers and sourcing
	Organising the negotiation
Managing International Trade Operations	Choosing and working with service providers
	Managing the international business administration
Working in a Multicultural Context	Business English language A
	Business foreign language B
	Intercultural management and communication

Source: Cominter *Complete profile of the «Import and export sales assistant» common certification*

3.2. Competence areas approach (VQTS)

Another approach to group learning outcomes into units is by referring to broader areas of competence. The VQTS project approach defines a number of **competence areas** for a certain occupational field (these are further described in terms of steps of competence development). One competence area comprises various forms of knowledge, skills and competence necessary for completing core work tasks in a certain occupational field. These core work tasks must be derived empirically from the working world (work practice/work place). Only holistic competences that actually exist in the world of work are to be described and differentiated. Just as core work tasks have a complex relationship to the work process, competence areas also represent a certain complexity.

Based on the key activities (or core work tasks), a varying number of competence areas are defined, depending on the complexity, range of activities or job opportunities within a certain occupation. The VQTS project identified the following competence areas for the occupational field of Mechatronics:

- Maintaining and assuring the reliability of mechatronic systems;
- Installing and dismantling mechatronic systems and facilities;
- Installing and adjusting mechatronic components in systems and production lines;
- Designing, adapting, and building mechatronic systems and facilities on the basis of client needs and site plans;
- Putting mechatronic systems into operation and providing clients with technical and economic support;
- Supervising and evaluating both the process sequences of mechatronic systems and facilities and the operational sequence (including quality assurance);
- Installing, configuring, programming and testing hardware and software components for control and regulation of mechatronic systems and facilities;
- Preparing and distributing the technical information for adjustment of each enterprise's mechatronic systems;
- Diagnosing and repairing malfunctions with mechatronic systems and facilities, advising clients on avoiding malfunctions, and modifying and expanding mechatronic systems;

For more information and the full description of the VQTS competence matrix see:
<http://www.vocationalqualification.net>

3.3. Product/service oriented approach (Baltic Education)

Another approach to clustering learning outcomes to units is according to the different products or services provided by persons holding the qualification concerned. The Baltic Education project identified the following units for the qualification of painter and wallpaper hanger:

- Paintwork (indoor and outdoor);
- Glue and wallpaper hanger work;
- Object lacquering and metal painting;
- Dam work;
- Floor covering work;
- Plaster work;
- Dry mortarless construction work;
- Designing and renovation work.

Source: Baltic Education: Vocational Education and Training in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) – The Modularisation of Qualification Units for the Core Profession “Painter and wallpaper hanger”

4. Units in the framework of ECVET partnerships for mobility

4.1. Agreeing equivalence between units (VaLOGreg)

The VaLOGreg project is not concerned with designing common units or references but it directly analyses existing qualifications to agree equivalence across units where they exist.

For this purpose the project first identifies which qualifications in the areas concerned by the partnership (mechanics and electro-technicians) are broadly comparable. This is done by analysing the job profile, its field of activity and key occupational tasks.

Each qualification is then analysed by a group of national experts (concerning that specific qualification) with regard to the ECVET criteria. This means that each expert group provides a description of the national qualification that follows the ECVET specifications: e.g. units have a title and learning outcomes for each unit are described, etc.

In the third stage the experts in each area discuss and produce a common statement on the compatibility or congruence but possibly also differences in learning outcomes across the qualifications in the partner countries. This outcome is then validated by a steering group. As a result a decision is taken on which units from the existing qualifications can be used for ECVET mobility.

In countries involved in the partnership where units do not exist in the qualifications system, learning outcomes comparable to those in other partner countries are grouped into units specifically for the purpose of mobility.

Source: VaLOGreg

4.2. Identifying units 'open to mobility' (ECVET ASSET)

The project ECVET ASSET defines a small number of units that are common to the partners involved and which are suitable for mobility purposes. Similar to the example above, the project first identifies which qualifications are comparable across the partner systems.

In analysing the qualifications in terms of key occupational activities, the partners identify areas which are common to the qualifications in the partner systems. Afterwards only the areas (at this stage defined in terms of occupational activities) that are suitable for mobility are selected (see below). These are described in terms of learning outcomes, agreements are designed concerning their assessment and validation. These units are described as 'open to mobility' because they have been designed to fit the mobility context of this specific partnership.

The criteria for designing these units 'open to mobility' are:

- Convergence among the qualifications in countries concerned: this means that the content of the unit (the learning outcomes) is present in the qualifications of all the partner countries;
- The size of the unit: the number and the complexity of learning outcomes in the unit have to be suitable for a mobility period of three weeks;

- Pedagogical progression: the partnership has agreed that the mobility will take place in the second part of the training (equivalent to the second year in some of the systems). Therefore the learning outcomes in these units have to be at the level (in terms of complexity) of what is expected to be achieved in the second part of the training programme.

4.3. Creation of common reference units (Recomfor/Cominter)

The common reference units approach follows these main steps:

- 1 Defining a reference job profile at European level (among the partner institutions). In the case of the Recomfor and Cominter projects this concerns the « import export sales assistant ». The profile is described in terms of activities and tasks. The design of this profile involves consultation with representatives of the sector. The profile takes into account different national specificities but its main objective is to highlight the common key activities;
- 2 Defining knowledge, skills and competence learners need to master in order to obtain the qualification;
- 3 Grouping these learning outcomes into units based on the key activities.

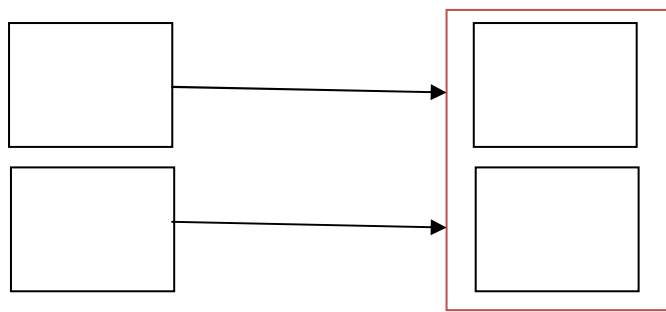
Flexible procedures have been put in place to adapt the reference units to the reality of national qualifications:

The common reference units allow for a flexible adaptation to each national system. There are different ways in which the common description can be used:

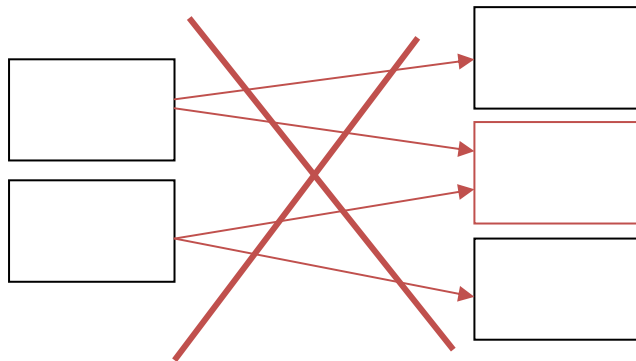
- It makes up the national qualification: in this case all the reference units are retained at national level and there are no additional national units/learning outcomes;
- The reference units make up a part of a broader qualification: other units can thus be added to the common reference units;
- The reference units can be part of several qualifications: only part of the common reference units is thus retained and these make up a qualification in itself.

Units, as they have been defined, are coherent groupings of learning outcomes, but it is always possible to find other coherences. In that case, units can be grouped together to form larger units, or units can be subdivided to form a set of smaller units. Therefore, it is important to respect a few simple rules to maintain compatibility with other systems and enable mobility possibilities.

From reference units to wider national units

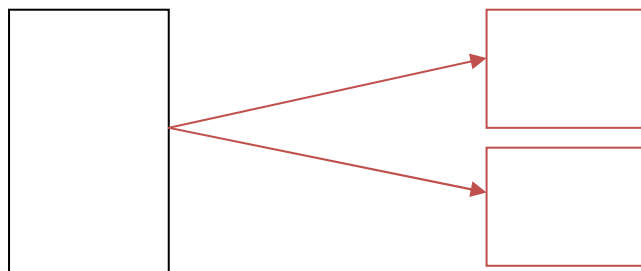


2 (or more) reference units make one national unit

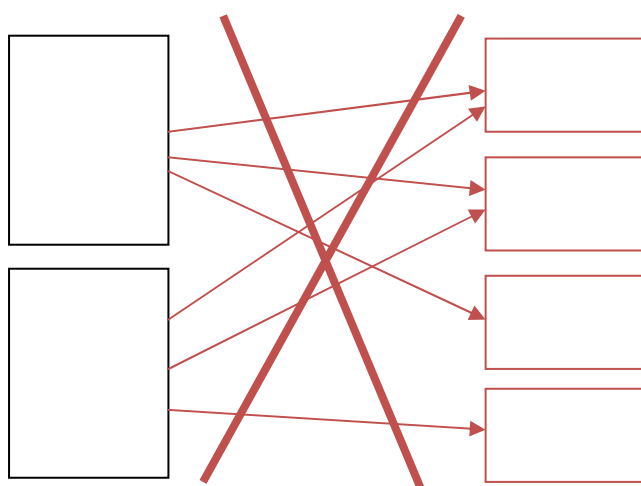


It is not possible to share out learning outcomes from one reference unit by reconstructing disparate units

From reference units to smaller units



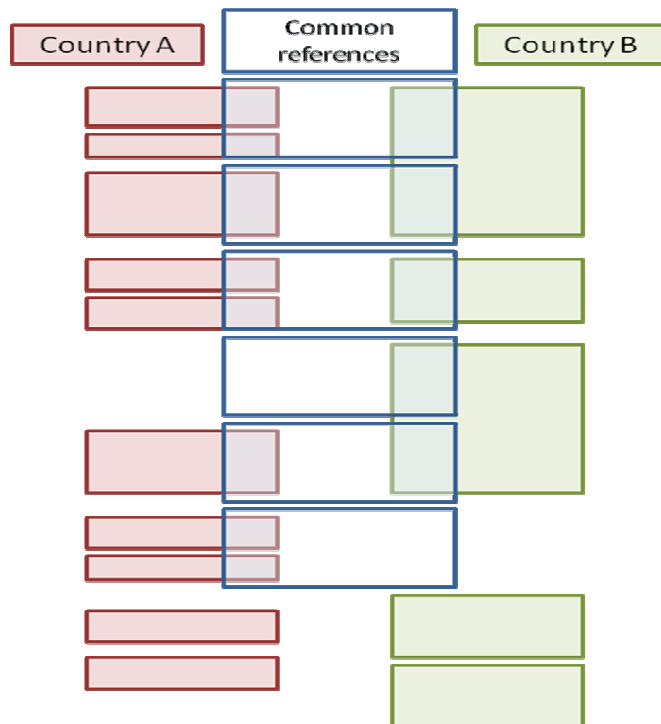
Learning outcomes from one reference unit can be spread out into several national units, maintaining the integrity of the reference unit.



Learning outcomes from one reference unit cannot be spread out into several national units if this leads to building disparate units.

Combined solutions can be envisaged if the integrity of reference units is preserved.

Through this mechanism, qualifications can be compared across the systems and comparable units can be easily identified and recognised.



4.4. Defining common units (SME Master)

The SME Master project defines units that are common to the qualifications of Master Baker across the participating countries. These units and their learning outcomes are defined at a rather general level so as to enable for variations at national level. Furthermore the list of units defined by the project represents the current status quo of the master craftsperson qualification. In order to take into account future developments of this qualification profile and to remain open to other countries, the learning outcome matrix can be extended by adding new units. The existing units must be regularly reviewed and, if necessary, amended or removed altogether.

The SME Master project observed that the job specification of master craftsperson are quite similar in all the partner countries: an entrepreneurial qualification for SMEs, combining commercial and personnel management skills as well as technical and vocationally-specific know-how.

Correspondingly, despite all differences across the countries, several overlaps were identified with regard to the structure and contents of master craftsperson training and qualifications. In addition to a vocationally-specific area (identical for all the master craftsperson training programmes of a country) in which particular emphasis is placed on imparting business administration as well as teaching and training skills, the training involves a technical area in which the trade-specific competences of a vocation or a sector are imparted.

In a first step two major areas of activity – “management” and “technology” – are identified. These are then subdivided into several units. Following a further differentiation, ten units have been established corresponding to the essential areas of activities of the master craftsman. These ten units are:

- Accounting and Controlling;
- Budgeting and Calculation;
- Entrepreneurship and Financial Management for SME;
- Human Resources Management;
- Tutoring;
- Marketing and Sales Management for SME;
- Production of Bakery Products;
- Food Safety and Hygiene;
- Quality and Security Management;
- Vocationally-specific Business Administration;

Consequently the learning outcome matrix represents those learning outcomes featured in the master craftsman qualification of **all SME Master partner countries**. Specific competences of individual qualification profiles (e.g. foreign language skills in France) remain unconsidered. The result is thus a learning outcome oriented representation of the “**smallest common denominator**”, i.e. of a "core qualification profile" of the Master Baker.

Source: SME Master http://stage.sunbeam-berlin.de/zdh/uploads/media/SME-Master_Manual_01.pdf

5. ECVET unit descriptions

5.1. ECVET pilot project Recomfor/Cominter

Generic Title of the Unit:	Market research and market planning on foreign markets
Title of the Qualification:	Import and Export Sales assistant
EQF Level:	<i>Not yet defined</i>
ECVET points:	24 (20% of the overall qualification)

Learning outcomes description:

(Note that there is no specific link across the rows in the table below – i.e. the skills, competences and knowledge should not be read horizontally across the row.)

Skills	Competence	Knowledge
Collecting information through permanent market monitoring (desk research) and field research abroad and checking reliability	Organising and planning work activities, being autonomous	International marketing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction to marketing - Market principles and structure - Marketing plan - Monitoring and Market studies - Export « swot » - Internationalization strategies - Internationalization support networks
Analysing and selecting relevant commercial information and regulation constraints about foreign markets	Being alert to opportunities and threats	
Formulating requirements for the subcontracting of studies and following up on the studies on foreign markets	Applying commercial insight	
Proposing a general outline for a concrete action plan based upon the commercial policy of the company and the SWOT analysis		
Making a summary and communicating to superiors to prepare decision making		
		Computing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information research techniques
		Economic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Economic, human and social indicators - Development and international trade indicators - Insertion of national into international economy - Principles of organisation of international exchanges - Principal trends of world exchanges
		Geopolitic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Different zones - Country risks and rating - Identities - Natural and human resources
		Laws and regulations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Legal system - Regulations fields (norms, certification, exchange regulations) - International legal frameworks - Fiscal, customs regulation
		Management tools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Statistical analysis (descriptive statistics and prevision methods)
		Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professional written communication

Source: Comiter Complete profile of the «Import and export sales assistant» common certification

Procedures and criteria for assessment: *Not yet specified – project still ongoing*

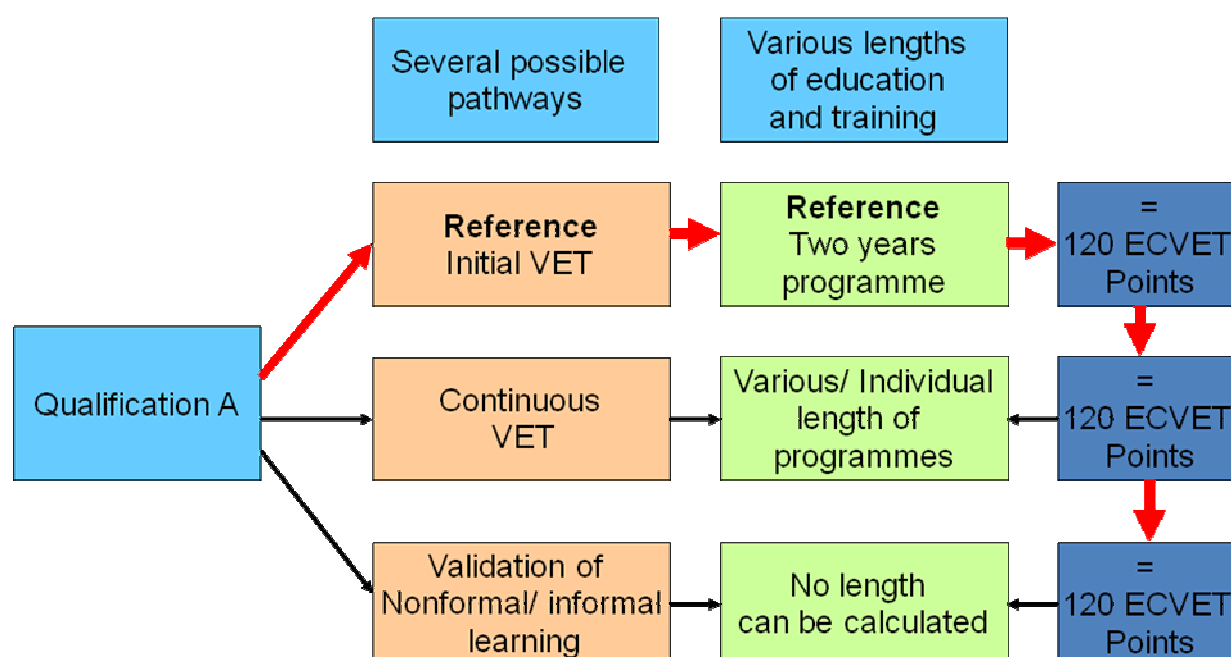
5.2. ECVET pilot project SME Master

Title of the Qualification:	Master Baker crafts-person		
EQF Level:	<i>Not yet defined</i>		
Generic Title of the Unit:	Production of bread, small breads and rolls		
ECVET points	<i>Not yet specified</i>		
Procedures and Criteria for assessment	<i>Not yet specified</i>		
Learning outcomes:	S/he is able to choose ingredients production methods and techniques for various types of:	S/he is able to demonstrate mastery in the production of these various types of bread, small breads and rolls.	S/he is able to design, decorate and present these various types of bread, small breads and rolls according to customers' orders.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • white, brown and mixed bread, • traditional, specific and organic bread, • small breads and rolls. 		S/he is able to modify existing recipes and production methods of bread, small breads and rolls.
	S/he is able to apply the recipes.		S/he is able to develop innovative recipes and production methods of bread, small breads and rolls.

Source: SME Master Plus

6. Allocation of ECVET points to qualifications

To allocate ECVET points to a qualification, a reference learning pathway is chosen. This can be, for example, the most typical pathway (in terms of number of learners). Using the convention concerning ECVET points, the number of ECVET points for the qualification is defined (one year = 60 ECVET points). For example 120 points for a qualification that has a reference pathway which lasts two years. In consequence the qualification is allocated 120 ECVET points even though it can be prepared through a shorter or a longer pathway (see figure below).



For example in France, the upper-secondary qualification *Baccalauréat professionnel* (vocational baccalaureate) can be achieved through:

- Initial school-based VET – normal duration of the programme is three years;
- Through apprenticeship training – the normal duration is also three years;
- Continuing VET – the duration varies: for example the *Baccalauréat professionnel* in accounting may be prepared in two years through an apprenticeship mode by people having 3 years experience in accounting and a prior qualification of BEP or CAP (these are lower upper secondary VET qualifications); it can also be prepared in one year or less depending on the prior knowledge and experience of the person through school-based mode of VET⁴.
- The full qualification can also be achieved through validation of non-formal and informal learning or by combining continuing training and validation.

⁴ Information taken from the training offer catalogue of Greta Tertiaire Sud 77: <http://www.greta-tersud77.org/CA-2008-2009.pdf>

Source: Ministry of National Education: <http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid2552/le-baccalaureat-professionnel.html>

If the initial VET programme is taken as the reference pathway (this is actually the most commonly pursued route) the vocational baccalaureate qualification would have 180 ECVET points. This number of ECVET points would apply independent of the route followed to achieve the qualification.

7. Allocation of ECVET points to units

7.1. Relative importance of learning outcomes in units (Recomfor/Cominter)

The Cominter common methodology for credit points' allocation was developed taking into account none of the countries involved in the project were using a credit point system. All main actors with roles in the certification process in the countries involved (employers in the trade sector, institutions responsible for certification process, training centres) actively participated in each phase of the project. This working method was also used for the development of the methodology for credit points' allocation.

Phase 1: Employers and professional organisations involved in the project were consulted in order to establish the importance of each unit with regard to the job requirements (relevance and importance of the learning outcomes for the professional activities). This importance, expressed as percentage, reveals the relative weight of each unit leading to a hierarchy of units in the qualification.

Phase 2: Analysis of learning outcomes in each unit in terms of complexity from the point of view of the learning process. This analysis was carried out by the training providers on the basis of the hierarchy resulting from phase 1 (without modifying it). The goal was to fine-tune the percentage allocated to units.

Transcription of the reference allocation into national context:

- Credit points have been allocated to the common reference units: knowing that these units can be adapted in each national context and therefore may not be identified under exactly the same form in the national qualifications;
- To maintain the coherence of the common work, the transcription of points allocated to units at national level must not lead to a variation higher than 10% in comparison with the common definition.
- This relative value of the unit is expressed in the form of a percentage (as compared to all the reference units in the common profile). The reason for using a percentage is explained in the example from Cominter concerning the way reference units are adapted at national level varies.

The convention, as expressed in a percentage, will only be effective once each national system has defined its own rules. Therefore, the allocation of points as expressed in table below is indicative and allows adjustments according to each system.

Guidelines for the relative allocation of credit points

Certification units Sub units	Credit points/%
UC1 International Marketing	20%
UC11 Market research and market planning on foreign markets	10
UC12 Business information system	10
UC2 Export Selling	20%
UC 21 Prospecting and customer/partner follow up	10
UC 22 Negotiating	10
UC3 Import Buying	20%
UC31 Identifying potential suppliers and sourcing	10
UC32 Organising the negotiation	10
UC4 Managing International Trade Operations	20%
UC41 Choosing and working with service providers	10
UC42 Managing the international business administration	10
UC5 Working in a Multicultural Context	20%
UC51 Business English language A	8
UC52 Business foreign language B	8
UC53 Intercultural management and communication	4
TOTAL	100

Example of applying the common methodology to the national context: Romania

Certification units Sub units	Credit points/%	ECVET credit points	Romanian credit points
UC1 International Marketing	20%	24	6
UC11 Market research and market planning on foreign markets	10	12	3
UC12 Business information system	10	12	3
UC2 Export Selling	20%	24	6
UC 21 Prospecting and customer/partner follow up	10	12	3
UC 22 Negotiating	10	12	3
UC3 Import Buying	20%	24	6
UC31 Identifying potential suppliers and sourcing	10	12	3
UC32 Organising the negotiation	10	12	3
UC4 Managing International Trade Operations	20%	24	6
UC41 Choosing and working with service providers	10	12	3
UC42 Managing the international business administration	10	12	3
UC5 Working in a Multicultural Context	20%	24	6
UC51 Business English language A	8	10	2.5
UC52 Business foreign language B	8	10	2.5
UC53 Intercultural management and communication	4	4	1
TOTAL	100	120	30

7.2. Notional learning time (UK Qualifications and Credit Framework)

In the UK England Wales and Northern Ireland Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF), all units must identify a credit value (described in terms of points). This must be based on an estimation of the learning time. The learning time is defined as the time taken by learners at the level of the unit, on average, to complete the learning outcomes of the unit to the standard determined by the assessment criteria.

The function of learning time is to provide an indication of the volume of learning related to the achievement of specified outcomes. Learning time is not an exact, scientific measure but a judgement made and agreed by those who are informed and experienced in the relevant area of achievement and who understand the contexts in which the learning can take place. The involvement of a panel or group of relevant experts will help the process and make sure that the credit value is recognised and accepted by the relevant stakeholders.

The concept of learning time is applicable to learning in diverse contexts.

This measure of learning time does not determine the time actually taken by any individual learner; the real time varies and is influenced by factors such as the individual's learning style and prior learning. It is important to emphasise that learning time is not the amount of time served, for example the number of hours a learner rehearses for a performance or the number of hours a learner spends training in the workplace. Nor is learning time the number of hours that a learner attends a course or the sum of hours of actual participation in learning activities.

The process of determining credit value focuses on the learning outcomes and assessment criteria in a unit. It does not focus on the mode of delivery used to support the learners in achieving those learning outcomes nor the context of delivery.

For more information see the UK QCF *Guidelines for writing credit-based units of assessment for the Qualifications and Credit Framework* <http://www.qcda.gov.uk/15545.aspx>

8. Example of a format for a Learning Agreement

Name of the Learner	
Contact details	(address, phone number, e-mail)
Qualification being prepared by the learner	
Period concerned (academic year)	
Home institution	(name, address)
Main contact person	(name, phone number, e-mail)
Hosting institution	(name, address, phone number, e-mail)
Main contact person	(name, phone number, e-mail)

Learner

DateSignature.....

Home institution

We confirm that the Learning Agreement is accepted

DateSignature.....

Hosting institution

We confirm that the Learning Agreement is accepted

DateSignature.....

Details of the Learning Agreement:

Course/module	Learning outcomes	Unit and ECVET points	Assessment (mode of assessment, timing)	Other information (if required)

9. Example of a format for a Personal Transcript

Learner			
First name		Family name	
Date of birth		Place of birth	
ID/passport/social security number*		Address	
Title of the training programme			
Qualification being prepared			

*select the appropriate

Unit (title)	Assessment result	ECVET points	Other (if required)

Hosting institution – Title	
Address	
Contact person	

Signature of the host institution

.....Date/Place.....Stamp.....

