

Platform I

Do we really speak the same language? Units as parts of qualifications are important for the implementation of ECVET.?

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Do we really speak the same language?

Europe is often accused of being like Babel, but Babel is not about the number of languages spoken. It is actually about the inability to understand and construct a living space together.

The question that emerged through the various answers was if we really speak the same language



Do we really speak the same language?



Looking at the answers received on the question “under what condition would you change your [positive] attitude towards ECVET we found among others answers like “fear of changes in national VET systems”.

Trying to be more specific one interviewee expressed this by considering that changes in ECVET would mean “compulsory modularisation”.

Units as parts of qualifications

ECVET definition: Unit is a set of knowledge, skills and competence which constitute a part of a qualification. A unit can be the smallest part of a qualification that can be assessed, validated and, possibly, certified. A unit can be specific to a single qualification or common to several qualifications.

A unit should typically give information such as:

- The title,
- The knowledge, skills and competence,
- The criteria for the assessment



Units as parts of qualifications

As modules are actually parts of a learning course, credits can be allocated to units whatever the learning modes are, because:

- The same learning outcomes may be achieved through different ways of training provision,
- The same learning outcomes may be achieved through non-formal or informal learning.

How can we avoid those misunderstandings?

We have to clarify the process of identification of units in the light of different types of systems.

The examples show that the description of the qualifications in units in the context of cross border transfer neither harmonizes nor causes fundamental changes in the national VET programs.

The key point remains the necessity to be able to transfer, accumulate and recognize learning outcomes no matter under which training system is provided but only considering the content of these learning outcomes, the contents of these units.



Step by step validation and transfer

ECVET is based on the description of qualifications in terms of knowledge, skills and wider competences, organised into units and on the allocation of credit points to the qualifications and units depending on their relative weight.

So, units and credit points give complementary information in qualitative and quantitative terms.

Step by step validation and transfer

The awarded units may be accumulated and may be gradually complemented until the qualification is achieved, in accordance with national rules and in conformity with national rules and examination procedures.

The application framework and the necessary legal provisions are decided by each country at the relevant level to insure quality.



Step by step validation and transfer and ... Babel

Many experts in the interviews “strongly support” transnational mobility, but have a less positive attitude towards the step-by-step validation of learning outcomes. This indicates a lack of clarity about the requirements, because transfer of results from one learning context to another will not be possible without step-by-step validation.



Step by step validation and transfer



Far from trying to harmonise the systems, we need to work together, learn from each other, and build common solutions. In this next phase we need to work urgently on the development of the European Qualifications Framework and the European Credit transfer systems for VET in order to provide a common – not single – currency through which all national qualifications and competences can easily be converted.