

The application of Learning Outcomes within a transnational work placement

Annex 1 – SEPLO SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS

- Dialogue around learning outcomes, guided by the ECVET framework can enhance the quality of a mobility placement
- The ECVET framework is recognised/used by all countries
- Europass Learning Outcomes can be used in job searches, (improve mobility of workers)
- Participants have a way of recording their learning whilst on a mobility
- It gives participants a framework and helps them to see the value of their learning experience
- Gives value to the diploma
- It is easier to define objectives of a placement
- Helps implementing organisations to find the right placement, if they have a clear understanding of the learning outcomes that participants would like to achieve
- It gives transparency/clarity/value to the learning experience
- It can avoid the need for classroom duplication

OPPORTUNITIES

- Opportunity for colleges who are already engaged in mobility to enhance the quality of their placement
- It can add value to the learning experience
- It can be used as a tool to strengthen partnership/understanding between hosting organisation/sending organisation
- At an organisational level, it is a way to engage management and integrate mobility in the curricula
- It is an opportunity to profile and/or promote your organisation
- Training providers can explore opportunities to carry out assessments whilst on mobility - learner, mentor, tutor
- Opportunities for digital assessment could be explored



WEAKNESSES

- The way ECVET is implemented and supported is different across EU countries
- There is a lack of knowledge/awareness/usage at implementation level
- There is a lack of engagement/enthusiasm/interest in the framework
- Hosting organisation considers it to be a lot of extra paperwork, (but it makes it easier to define the objectives of the placement)
- Challenging to implement when there are language barriers
- There is a real disparity in approaches to assessment, (they are not all competence based in all countries)

THREATS

- It is perceived as an “add-on” with no connection to actual learning, so could lose legitimacy in some countries
- There is a resistance to ‘Europeanisation’ in some quarters
- It is not seen as a priority/of national interest/essential to core business by accrediting bodies
- Policy change (re accreditation)
- The word ECVET is alienating or seen as more complicated than it is

Helps implementing organisations to find the right placement, if they have a clear understanding of the learning outcomes participants would like to achieve.

"One College highlighted the use of a consolidated procedure, consisting of a previous agreement between the company abroad and the vocational agency in Italy, about "possible" and "realistic" professional Learning Outcomes that the trainee can acquire/reinforce during the mobility experience.

So, a first joint reflection on what the trainee can really learn supports the definition of clear and realistic Learning Outcomes.

Thus, the quality of the mobility placement is also enhanced, since there is a clear understanding from the beginning, of what the learner will do and how through this activity, he will reach the agreed Learning Outcomes." Egina, Italy

The ECVET framework is recognised/used by all countries.

"For the last four years, CELF has been building up mobility networks with other VET related institutions around the Baltic Sea. CELF's experience of ECVET is now a known framework for securing the assessment and recognition of learning outcomes, in connection with international mobility and the VET provider level at least.

ECVET has given a common terminology and a number of tools to staff working international mobility." CELF, Denmark

It is easier to define objectives of placement.

"We faced the situation where young VET students did not understand what the mobility challenge was, because of a lack of maturity and school preparation.

Also, some Host Organisations were not used to managing a foreign trainee and didn't know how to delegate and train accordingly.

In these cases, ECVET units of Learning Outcomes help both the trainee and the Host Organisation mentor to see the internship more clearly in terms of objectives.

On the basis of the detailed Learning Outcomes agreed, the sending partner prepares the Learning Agreement that will be the media for both trainee and Host Organisation mentor, to agree on the operational tasks to be achieved. It can be seen as "a deal/contract" for both parties that helps provide structure to the placement." Alfmed, France



Challenging to implement when there are language barriers.

"One of the Colleges that we work with has developed guidance for 'expert witness statements', which could be used as a form of evidence to be gathered whilst learners are on placement, and would contribute to their end of unit assessment.

One challenge they have found is that the guidance and the detailed statement that they would like host organisations to write, requires a good level of English and grasp of the detail required.

It is not always possible to guarantee this with the host organization staff, which means that this form of evidence cannot be relied on."

REY Europe, UK

There is a lack of engagement/enthusiasm/interest in the framework.

"Through our research, it was clear at one College we contacted that there was a lack of engagement and interest in the ECVET framework, at the level of the International Coordinator.

ECVET is not understood fully, and often confused with Erasmus + subsidies, even by the person who should be coordinating its use within the College.

Value is not recognized at European level, EU involvement is questioned, ("Why does Brussels need to know about the contract between the student and company?").

This particular coordinator was convinced that the existing system covers all aspects, ("In the Southern countries it might be helpful, but here everything is well organised anyway").

There is confusion of Quality Assurance with recognition/accreditation."

EURICON, Netherlands



ECVET is transferable and can be used for any type of work based learning.

"Frans van Schaik, the International Coordinator of Horizon College in the Netherlands, has led an Erasmus+ KA2 project EMEU: Engineering Mobility in Europe. This project began by applying ECVET principles when creating VET modules in Engineering, for in-situ collaboration between national and visiting students, as well as virtual collaboration. Since then it has grown into the KA2 project EMEU4ALL, which aims to extend this to other vocational areas, including hospitality, business and ICT (<http://em-eu.eu/modules/>). This demonstrates clearly how the principles ensuring high quality can be applied across any type of work based learning." EURICON, Netherlands

At an organisational level, it is a way to engage management and integrate mobility in the curricula.

"The Danish VET system was reformed in 2015 and one change was to decrease the maximum possible length of the first learning year. This put international mobility under pressure because it was often planned as an extra curricula activity, which was not possible any more. This has led to a drop in international mobility in Denmark, but at CELF we have increased the number of mobilities in the same period of time. This is largely to do with our work with ECVET, because we worked together with the education departments to generate an elective subject called "internationalisation". We developed units of learning outcomes based on the competence goal of the different departments. In dialogue with the hosting organisation, we are using the units to make better matches between leaders and companies." CELF, Denmark

It can be used as a tool to strengthen partnership/understanding between hosting organisation and sending organisation.

"When a school/sending organisation/consortium is engaged in a mobility project with a hosting partner for the first time, clarification of objectives, means and procedures are compulsory. The ECVET framework supports this process. This is more likely needed when, for example:

- *The mobility targets 'uncommon' sectors that the hosting partner would not be familiar with.*
- *The mobility coordinator is not familiar with identifying pedagogical objectives.*
- *The student curricula covers a large scope of LO units of which some are typically applicable abroad (or not).*

In this perspective, ECVET framework and procedures related to setting out Learning Outcomes will help the dialogue between mobility actors." Alfmed. France

It is an opportunity for colleges who are already engaged in mobility to enhance the quality of their placement.

"One of the Italian schools we have consulted has been engaged in mobility for several years, and has recently adopted ECVET as a tool to support the recognition of Learning Outcomes. They are currently experimenting with a dual system for National and Transnational Work Based Learning (WBL), anticipating that this system for the recognition of Learning Outcomes will become systemic in Europe. This procedure will simplify the transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications across Europe.

In transnational WBL, the sending and the hosting organization sign the MoU (Memorandum of Understanding), where they mutually accept their respective criteria and procedures for quality assurance, assessment, validation and recognition of knowledge, skills and competences for the purpose of transferring credits. The quality of the internship is enhanced as the placement has a real coherence with the students' profile and the knowledge, skills and competences the learner will be able to develop." Egina, Italy





It is perceived as an add-on with no connection to actual learning and could lose legitimacy in some countries.

"As a project coordinator, this is also one of the major challenges in the day to day works of our own organisation.

Some department managers, teachers and also hosting organisations perceive ECVET as Brussels bureaucracy.

Therefore it is an important task to show the opportunities that ECVET brings as a tool for securing better quality in mobility, and that it can actually make the work with mobility easier for newcomers."

CELLF, Denmark

The word ECVET is alienating or seen as more complicated than it is.

"One College explained to us that they had engaged a partner College in another country, in order to set up a mobility placement with them.

As part of the project development, they asked the partner whether they were using ECVET.

The Partner was not familiar with ECVET, and so the College sent them the ECVET documents.

The Partner then notified them that they had chosen not to continue with the partnership, as they were overwhelmed with the additional documentation that had been sent to them."

REY Europe, UK