

FLASH REPORT

Event name

ETF Quality Assurance Forum webinar on peer visit as external evaluation tool, 16 November 2020

Main objective/s

- To present the ETF approach in organising peer visits
- To share the experience of a QA forum member in hosting a peer visit
- To share the experience of Austria in organising peer visits between VET schools

Background

The webinar was organised in the framework of the ETF Forum for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (QA Forum).

One of the tools developed by the forum to support its work is peer visits. A Peer visit is a form of external feedback from peers, when an external group of peer experts is invited to give feedback on a certain quality measure or process selected by the host institution. In the context of the ETF Quality Assurance Forum, peer visits are used as transnational peer reviews of national policies, where peers represent VET quality assurance authorities in different countries. Peer visits can also be used in a wider context, between VET schools of the same country.

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE EVENT

The webinar was attended by more than 50 participants. It began with an introduction to ETF's approach to peer visits: aims, four phases and added value for both the host country and the visitors.

This introduction was followed up with an interview of the National Contact Person in Tunisia as the country hosted the first QA forum peer visit. The following issues were discussed: the decision to host the peer visit, the selection of the QA measure to be reviewed by the peers, the preparation for the peer visit and the benefits from the peer visit.

Finally, the Austrian Reference Point for Quality Assurance in VET described how individual VET schools could ask for, and receive, a peer review on the quality assurance of their VET provision. The Austrian model involves a group of "critical friends" (these are qualified peers) who visit the VET provider for two days. They then give supportive and critical feedback to the VET school concerning the questions and evaluation areas which the school has chosen.

There was considerable support for peer visits/reviews and the ETF online poll on whether the webinar's participants would be interested in becoming involved highlighted 88% support (with the remaining 12% of respondents being unsure). No one indicated that they were uninterested in becoming involved.

KEY OUTCOMES/CONCLUSIONS

Three conclusions emerged from the presentations and the discussion:

- There is an increasing trend towards using more peer visits/reviews to provide an external perspective on quality assurance.
- The importance of the national culture of quality assurance. Any peer visit/review must be based on, and be part of, the national approach and system
- The importance of the final stage of the peer visit/review process.

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