

National context report for the ETF Forum Peer Visit procedure

Name of the host Forum member institution:

National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research

Republic of Moldova

Author(s):

Stela Guvir, Head of Public Relations and International Cooperation Office

Elena Petrov, Vice-President of ANACEC

Ivan Volnetiri, Head of the Department of vocational education and training, and continuous training evaluation

Date/Version:

06.04.2023

(A) VET and quality assurance in VET in the Republic of Moldova

The key institution responsible for the governance of education sector is the Ministry of Education and Research (MER).

In addition, the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research (ANACEC) is responsible for the development and promotion of the quality culture, contributing to both initial and continuing VET.

The key legislation relevant for education is the [Education Code](#)¹ (in force as of 2014), which describes main principles of service delivery in education, including, for example, decentralisation, institutional autonomy, public accountability, transparency or the support and promotion of education personnel.

The education system in the Republic of Moldova is organized by levels and cycles in accordance with the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED-2011):

a) level 0 - early education:

- kindergarten;

- preschool education;

b) level 1 - primary education;

c) level 2 - secondary education, cycle I: gymnasium education;

d) level 3:

- secondary education, cycle II: high school education;

- secondary vocational education and training;

e) level 4 - post-secondary vocational education and training;

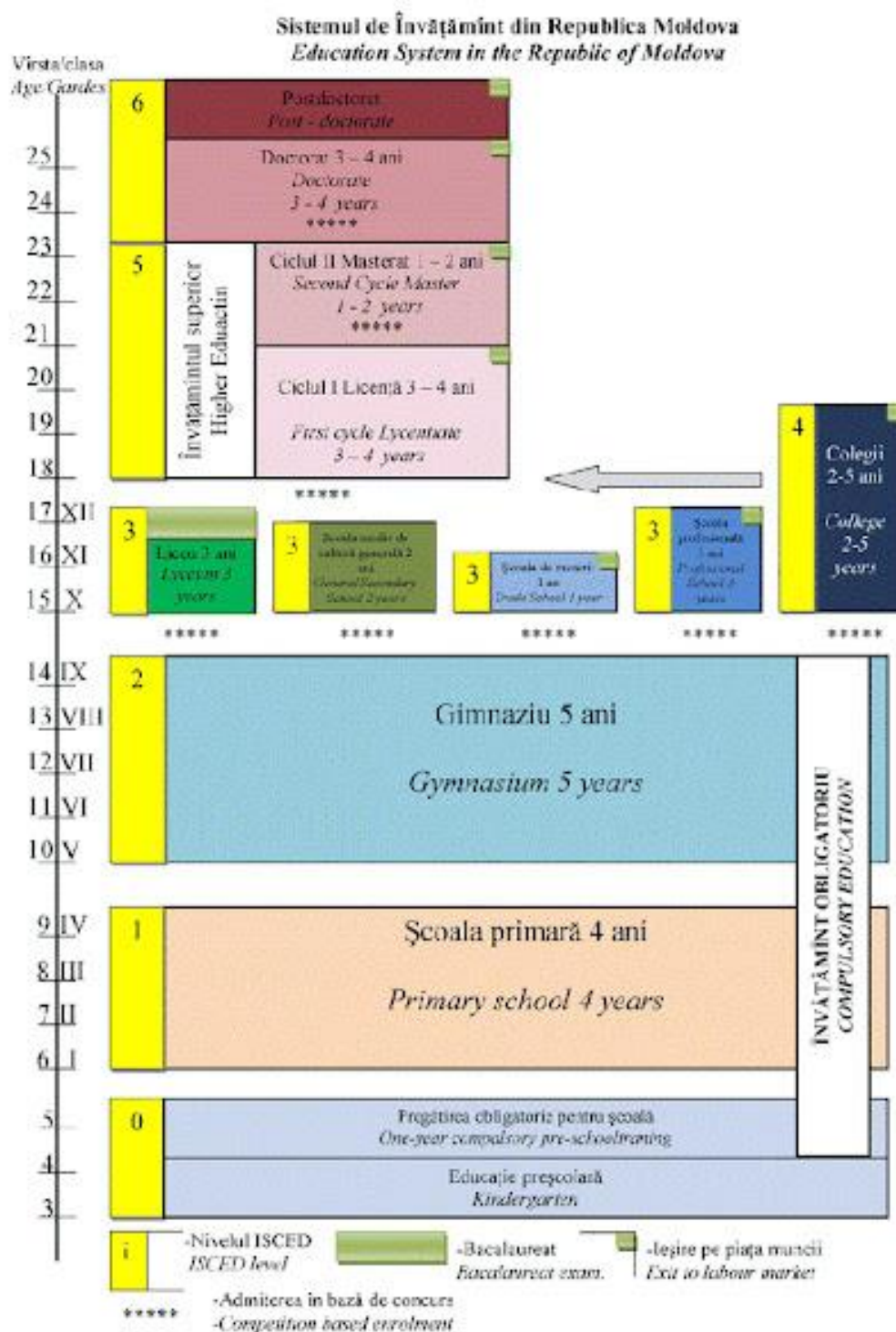
f) level 5 - non-tertiary post-secondary vocational education and training;

g) level 6 - higher education, cycle I: bachelor;

h) level 7 - higher education, cycle II: master;

i) level 8 - higher education, cycle III: doctorate.

¹ Available in Romanian and Russian



The VET system includes all educational institutions that offer programs of:

a) professional training of skilled workers, foremen, technicians and other categories of specialists in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework, with the Nomenclature of professional training fields and trades/professions, with the Nomenclature of professional training fields, specialties and qualifications, approved by the Government, as well as with ISCED levels 3, 4 and 5;

b) retraining of workers and specialists in various fields of professional training;

c) strengthening the professional skills of qualified workers, in accordance with the requirements of the economy and the labour market.

VET institutions are established, reorganized, and liquidated by the Government at the initiative of the founder.

The general organization of VET is regulated by the Education Code and by the framework regulation approved by the Ministry of Education and Research².

Vocational training in VET institutions is organized based on the standards and the Curriculum in VET³.

In VET, for certain trades/professions dual education can be applied, under the conditions established by the Ministry of Education and Research through coordination with other relevant central bodies and interested economic agents. Dual education takes place, in parallel, in VET institutions and in a company or other economic units.

VET can also take place in penitentiary institutions, through the organization of vocational schools or vocational training programs assigned to secondary VET institutions operating in their vicinity, with the approval of the Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Justice.

The centre of excellence is a VET institution, with increased potential, having attributions both in the field of organizing combined vocational training programs and in the field of developing the capacities of the VET system.

VET institutions in the RM			ISCED level
Type of institution	Nr. of institutions	Pupils (thousand)	
VET schools (secondary VET institutions)	42	13,9	3
Colleges (post-secondary and non-tertiary post-secondary VET institutions)	36	19,4	3, 4, 5
Centres of excellence (post-secondary and non-tertiary post-secondary VET institutions)	13	12,7	3, 4, 5

(Source: https://statistica.gov.md/ro/statistic_indicator_details/5)

The duration and structure of the study year in VET is regulated by the educational framework plan approved by the Ministry of Education and Research.

Admission to VET institutions is based on secondary or high school studies. People who have obtained high school certificates or their equivalent can be admitted to VET institutions only for secondary and post-secondary VET programs.

VET is financed:

a) from the state budget;

² List of regulatory documents can be found on the ministry's webpage (available in Romanian) - <https://mec.gov.md/ro/content/invatamintul-profesional-tehnic>

³ The curricula can be found on the ministry's webpage (available in Romanian) - <https://mec.gov.md/ro/content/curriculum>

- b) from the study fees paid by the natural and legal persons interested;
- c) from other legally established sources.

VET institutions can charge candidates registration fees for the organization and realization of admission, in the amount established by the Government.

The plan for admission to VET with funding from the state budget is established by the Government.

The professional training of people with special educational requirements is carried out, according to the Nomenclature of professional training fields and trades/professions and the Nomenclature of professional training fields, specialties, and qualifications, in trade classes in special education institutions and within VET.

There are three types of VET professional training programs:

- a) secondary VET programs (ISCED level 3);
- b) post-secondary VET programs (ISCED level 4);
- c) non-tertiary post-secondary VET programs (ISCED level 5).

VET programs are carried out in public and private VET institutions (VET schools, colleges, and centers of excellence), authorized for provisional operation or accredited, in partnership with enterprises and organizations appropriate to the training profile.

VET is also organized in residential institutions - for orphaned children or those left without parental care, in special education institutions, in penitentiary institutions and in medical institutions.

Secondary VET is organized as full-time education.

Post-secondary and non-tertiary post-secondary VET are organized as full-time or part-time education.

Secondary VET programs ensure the initial and continuous professional training of skilled workers, within the limits of the existing qualification categories.

Secondary VET lasts for:

- a) 3 years - for training in related trades, based on secondary school studies;
- b) 2 years - for training in a trade, based on secondary school studies;
- c) 1-2 years - for dual education, based on secondary school studies;
- d) 1-2 years - depending on the complexity of the job, based on high school studies or secondary studies of general culture.

Within the 2-year secondary VET programs, for training in a trade, groups of students may include people who have not completed 9 grades, but who have reached the age of 16, with the consent of the Ministry of Education and Research.

The training process within the secondary VET programs is carried out in accordance with the national reference standards and the accreditation standards developed by the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research and approved by the Government.

Admission to secondary VET programs is organized under the conditions established by the Ministry of Education and Research.

The competencies that graduate of secondary VET programs must possess are formulated in the National Framework of Qualifications.

Secondary VET programs are completed by passing the qualification exam, upon passing which a qualification certificate and the descriptive supplement of the certificate are issued, according to Europass.

The qualification certificate allows employment according to the qualification obtained, as well as the continuation of studies in high schools with a theoretical track and/or in post-secondary VET programs, depending on the level of training obtained previously in the educational programs completed, under the conditions established by the Ministry of Education and Research.

Post-secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary VET programs ensure the training of foremen, technicians, technologists, medical and pharmaceutical personnel, other specialists in various fields in accordance with ISCED levels 4 and 5.

Postsecondary VET programs correspond to ISCED level 4 and last for:

- a) 4 years - for integrated programs, based on secondary school studies;
- b) 5 years - for integrated programs, for medicine and pharmacy profiles, based on secondary school studies;
- c) 3 years - for integrated programs, in the specialties of choreography and teacher's assistant, based on secondary school studies;
- d) 3 years - in the form of part-time education, based on the certificate of high school studies and secondary studies of general culture;
- e) 2 - 3 years - in specialties related to the initial job, based on the qualification certificate;
- f) 2 years - in full-time education, based on the certificate of high school studies and secondary studies of general culture.

Post-secondary non-tertiary VET programs correspond to ISCED level 5 and last for:

- a) 4–5 years – for integrated programs, based on secondary school studies;
- b) 2–3 years – based on the baccalaureate diploma.

Admission to post-secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary VET programs is based on the Nomenclature of professional training fields, specialties, and qualifications and under the conditions established by the Ministry of Education and Research, on places with funding from the state budget or with tuition fees paid by individuals or legal persons.

The training process for post-secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary VET programs is carried out in accordance with national reference standards and accreditation standards.

The post-secondary VET programs are completed with the mandatory taking, in the manner established by the Ministry of Education and Research, of the professional baccalaureate exam, the qualification exam and/or the diploma thesis, as well as with the voluntary taking of the national baccalaureate exam.

Post-secondary non-tertiary VET programs are completed:

- a) with the mandatory taking, in the manner established by the Ministry of Education and Research, of the professional baccalaureate exam, the qualification exam and/or the diploma thesis, as well as with

the voluntary taking of the national baccalaureate exam - for students who studied in the basis of integrated programs (secondary studies);

b) with the mandatory taking of the qualification exam and/or the diploma thesis - for students who studied based on the baccalaureate diploma.

Post-secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary VET are completed with the issuance of the diploma of professional studies, which gives the holder the right to be employed and to participate in the admission competition in the first cycle of higher education in a specialty in the studied field.

The competencies that graduates of post-secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary VET programs must have are formulated in the National Qualifications Framework.

Institutions offering secondary, post-secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary VET programs may form consortia with VET and/or higher education institutions under the law.

(B) Focus of the Peer Visit – the quality assurance in VET measure

Title of the quality assurance measure: **External evaluation methodology, evaluation standards for VET programs and institutions in the Republic of Moldova**

Quality in education is perceived as a set of characteristics of a study program and its providers, through which the expectations of the beneficiaries are satisfied in relation to the quality standards.

Quality management in VET in the Republic of Moldova is ensured:

- at the national level - by the Ministry of Education and Research, relevant ministries and the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research;
- at the institutional level - by the respective quality assurance structures in education.

Quality evaluation in VET is carried out based on national reference standards, accreditation standards and the methodology developed by ANACEC and approved by the Government.

Quality evaluation in VET aims at:

- institutional capacity;
- educational efficiency, including school results;
- the quality of professional training programs;
- institutional quality management;
- the concordance between the internal evaluation and the real situation.

Quality evaluation in VET includes:

- evaluation of professional training programs;
- evaluation of institutions that offer professional training programs.

The internal evaluation of quality in VET is carried out by institutional quality assurance structures, based on national reference and accreditation standards, as well as based on institutional regulations.

The external evaluation of quality in VET is carried out by ANACEC, as well as by other competent structures.

The national QA system in VET involves the completion of two successive stages of external quality evaluation of study programmes/educational institutions with different purposes, in terms of the rights granted to the institutions:

1

Authorization of provisional operation

represents the act of establishment of the institution/initiation of the study programme and grants the right:

- to carry out the educational process, and
- to organize admission to studies

2

Accreditation/reaccreditation

grants the right:

- to carry out the educational process;
- to organize admission to studies;
- to organize the final examination, and
- to issue diplomas, certificates and other study documents recognized by the MER

In accordance with the provisions of the Education Code, ANACEC elaborates the methodology of external evaluation and criteria that are approved by the Government and applies them within the external evaluations of the quality of study programmes and of institutions providing educational services.

So far, based on this methodology of external evaluation (approved by Government Decision no. 616 of 18.05.2016), a total of 531 external evaluations were conducted by ANACEC in the field of VET:

Years	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
VET institutions						
Authorized for provisional operation	1	0	0	0	0	0
Non-authorized for provisional operation	0	0	0	0	0	0
Accredited	1	0	0	0	0	0
Non-accredited	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total VET institutions externally evaluated						2
VET programs						
Authorized for provisional operation	18	2	13	4	8	15
Non-authorized for provisional operation	0	0	0	0	0	0
Accredited	4	14	67	129	132	115
Non-accredited	0	0	0	0	3	5
Total VET programs externally evaluated						529

Why did you select this quality assurance in VET measure for a Peer Visit?

It should be noted that since its approval in 2016, the external evaluation methodology has been amended and supplemented twice - in 2018 and 2022. Considering the results of the external evaluation activities, following the general findings and the recommendations formulated by the parties involved in this process, as well as the changes made in the external evaluation methodology, the *Guidelines for the external evaluation* were updated. The changes made in the mentioned Guidelines concern the reference documents, the evaluation standards, the points awarded and the weight per performance indicators. Thus, while ANACEC is constantly in contact with its national stakeholders (MER, VET institutions, pupils/students, parents, graduates, labour market representatives etc.) during its external QA procedures, the external (international) input on the methodology and guidelines for the external evaluation would be much appreciated, especially in terms of aligning them to the EQAVET indicators and in the light of the best practices through the feedback provided by peers.

What are your expectations (desired/expected outcomes of the Peer Visit)?

Receive individual comprehensive feedback on:

- the effectiveness of the external evaluation methodology,
- the applicability and relevance of the evaluation standards for VET programs and VET institutions,

for their further improvement and alignment to the EQAVET indicators and to the best practices identified in both national and European contexts.

ANACEC would also like to learn about best practices in the field of external evaluation of VET programs and institutions from Forum members.

(C) Self-assessment of the quality assurance in VET measure

Title of the quality assurance in VET measure: **External evaluation methodology, evaluation standards for VET programs and institutions in the Republic of Moldova**

The *Methodology of external evaluation* and the *Guidelines for external evaluation* are the basic documents on which the Agency bases its external quality assurance activities.

1. “Evaluation of the effectiveness of the external evaluation procedure described by the Methodology of external evaluation”

ANACEC conducts the external evaluation process based on the [Methodology of external quality evaluation for the authorization of provisional operation and accreditation of vocational education and training, higher education and professional continuous training study programmes and institutions from the Republic of Moldova](#) approved by Government Decision no. 616/2016, with subsequent amendments.

The Methodology regulates the conceptual, normative and procedural framework of external quality evaluation for the authorization of provisional operation and accreditation of vocational education and training, higher education and continuous training study programmes and institutions of all types and forms of organization of education, by levels and cycles, in line with the Education Code and the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED-2011), as well as for state quality control in education and research.

The purpose of the Methodology is to establish, regulate and monitor how study programmes and educational institutions correspond to the quality level defined by national educational standards. This Methodology focuses on the following objectives:

- 1) to ensure the educational/academic community, beneficiaries, employers, and the general public in general that the study programme and the educational institution meet the minimum quality level, in relation to national reference standards and national and international best practices;
- 2) to assist educational institutions in developing an efficient management and a true quality culture, as well as to demonstrate their status by actual and relevant evidence and documents;
- 3) to stimulate the involvement of educational institutions in the continuous promotion of the quality of the educational process, research, innovation, artistic creation demonstrated through relevant results correlated with the requirements of the labour market;
- 4) to support educational institutions in the process of creating conditions for academic mobility and mutual recognition of study documents;
- 5) to promote cooperation between educational institutions in the conduct, monitoring and comparison of the educational process quality;
- 6) to identify, make public, and not accept any attempt of operation of a study programme or educational institution that does not meet the minimum quality standards.

Under this methodology, ANACEC performs the following types of external evaluation of VET study programmes and VET institutions for the purpose of:

- 1) *Authorization of provisional operation;*
- 2) *Accreditation / re-accreditation.*

The external evaluation process for the **authorization of provisional operation** is initiated and performed when initiating a study program or establishing an institution.

The authorization of provisional operation represents the act of establishment of the institution/initiation of the study programme and grants the right:

- to carry out the educational process, and
- to organize admission to studies.

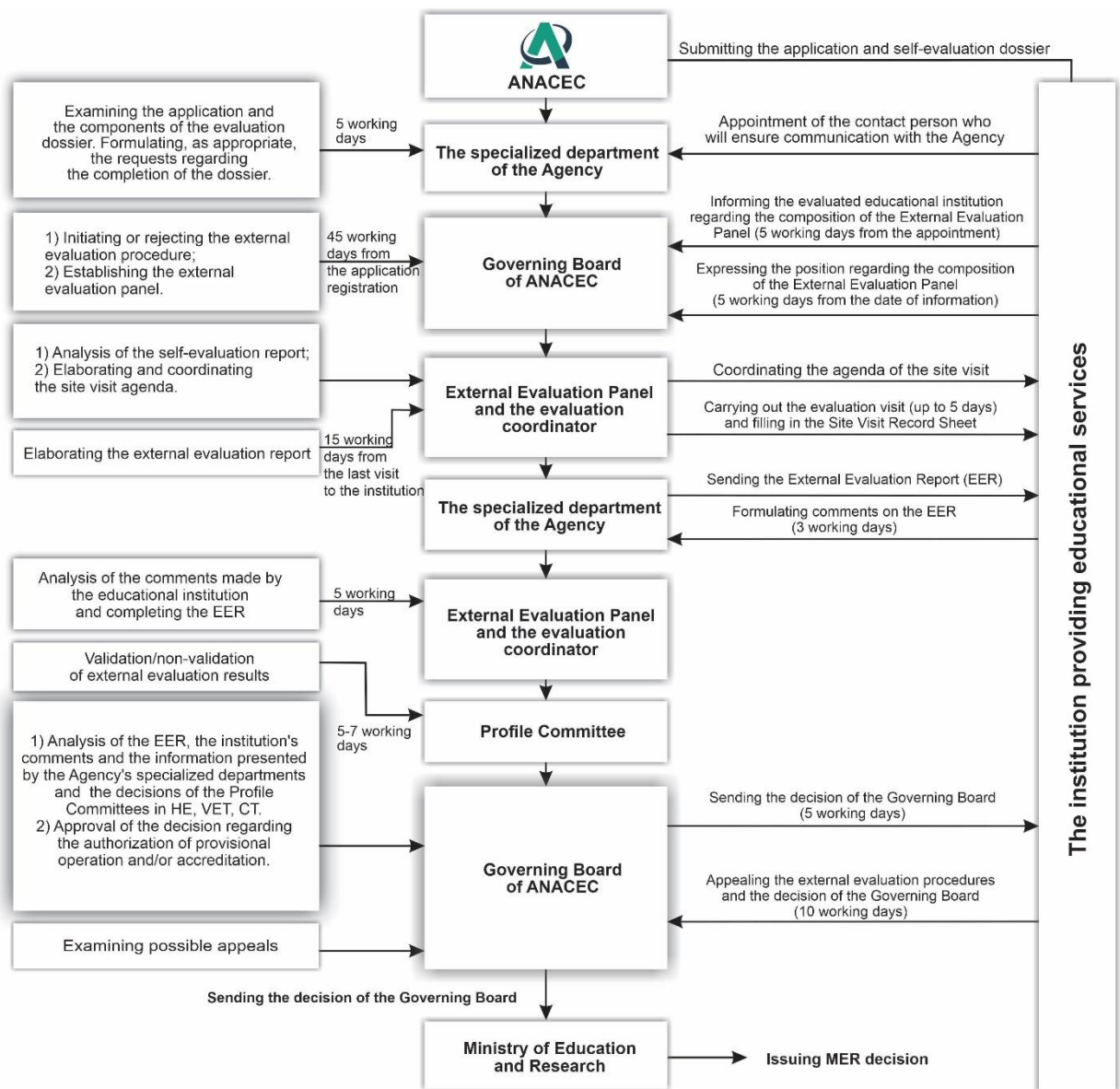
The external evaluation process for the **accreditation / re-accreditation** is initiated and performed upon expiry of the authorization of provisional operation / periodically, once every five years.

The accreditation/reaccreditation grants the right:

- to carry out the educational process;
- to organize admission to studies;
- to organize the final examination, and
- to issue diplomas, certificates and other study documents recognized by the Ministry of Education and Research.

Both VET study programmes and VET institutions are subject to external evaluation for the authorization of provisional operation and accreditation/re-accreditation based on the *Methodology of external evaluation*. Completing the external evaluation process for the authorization of provisional operation is mandatory before starting to operate, for any legal person, public or private, interested in offering study programmes in VET. Given that the authorization of provisional operation of study programmes expires after the first batch of graduates, VET institutions have to apply for external evaluation for accreditation. In addition, the law establishes that study programmes and accredited VET institutions are subject to periodic external evaluation, with a view to re-accreditation, at least once every 5 years.

The external quality evaluation procedure is initiated at the request of the VET institution/founder/MER and includes a series of stages. The process diagram, presented below, for external quality evaluation for the authorization of provisional operation/accreditation/reaccreditation of the study programme from its initiation to its completion shows all the stages of the process, their consecutiveness, the regulatory deadlines established for each and the responsible structures/subdivisions.



Thus, more specifically the successive stages presented in the diagram include:

1. Initiation of the evaluation procedure by the educational institution/consortium/partnership/subsidiary/founder/ MER.
2. Internal quality evaluation (self-evaluation) and the development of the self-evaluation report, a reflective document through which the institution reviews/analyses its own activities, considering how the evaluation standards are met, highlighting the identified strengths and the areas where further development is needed.
3. External quality evaluation:
 - a) submission of the application and the external evaluation dossier on paper and in electronic format, completed according to annex no. 1 of the Methodology, to the Department of vocational education and training, and continuous training evaluation (VET and CTE Department);
 - b) examination of the application and the components of the external evaluation dossier. Returning it to the educational institution in the event of detection of non-compliance with the rigors of completion or elaboration of the self-evaluation report. Formulation of requests to complete the dossier as appropriate.

- c) approval by the Governing Board of the decision to initiate or reject the initiation of the external evaluation procedure;
- d) establishment of the external evaluation panel of at least 3 members, selected from the Agency's Register of evaluators;
- e) informing the evaluated educational institution, within up to 5 working days from the date of appointment of the external evaluation panel, regarding its composition;
- f) presentation by the educational institution, within up to 5 working days from the date of the information, of the opinion regarding the composition of the external evaluation panel;
- g) the analysis of the external evaluation dossier and the self-evaluation report by the external evaluation panel and the prior establishment of the level of achievement of the accreditation standards, evaluation standards and mandatory minimum evaluation standards set out in the *Guidelines for external quality evaluation*;
- h) elaboration and coordination of the visit agenda with the educational institution and the chairperson of the external evaluation panel;
- i) carrying out the external evaluation visit to the institution and completing the „Site visit record sheet.”

The visit to the institution allows the members of the external evaluation panel to carry out the following activities:

- to examine the documents related to the activity of the educational institution and its subdivisions;
- to interview, at the choice of experts, representatives of employees, students/graduates of the educational institution, as well as employers;
- to access information related to the teaching activity, the teaching and administrative staff, the technical-material base, and the financial activity of the educational institution;
- to attend classes;
- to examine the internal quality assurance system;
- to obtain other information related to the activity of the educational institution.

The results of the visit are recorded in the Site visit record sheet, which is signed by all external evaluation panel members, a copy being kept at the evaluated institution.

- j) drafting, within up to 15 working days from the last visit to the institution, the external evaluation report containing the recommendation regarding the result of the external evaluation of the study programme/VET institution (authorization/non-authorization of provisional operation; accreditation/non-accreditation), as well as a series of quality improvement proposals. The recommendations are justified based on the data collected during the evaluation visit, as well as those resulting from the analysis of the documents made available by the institution subject to external evaluation;
- k) sending the external evaluation report to the educational institution subject to the external evaluation procedure, which, within 3 working days of receiving the Report, can make comments and provide additional evidence, if necessary;
- l) analysis of the comments made by the educational institution, within up to 5 working days; finalizing the external evaluation report by the external evaluation panel;
- m) examining and validating the results of the external evaluation by the [Profile Committee in VET](#) and submitting the proposed decisions, accompanied by minutes, to the Governing Board;
- n) examination of the evaluation results and decision-making by the Governing Board, which is based on the proposal presented by the external evaluation panel, validated by the Profile Committee in VET, the comments made by the VET institution, as well as additional materials presented at the request of the Governing Board;

- o) examination of possible appeals: as a result of the examination of the appeal, the Appeals Committee prepares a report that also includes the Report of Appeal Examination, which are subsequently examined in the Governing Board meeting (see the [Regulation on the Settlement of petitions submitted to ANACEC](#)).
4. Sending the Governing Board decision to the MER.
5. Publication of the [Governing Board decision](#)⁴ and the [external evaluation report](#)⁵ on the ANACEC website.
6. Granting of the authorization of provisional operation/accreditation/reaccreditation by MER.
7. Monitoring the implementation of the recommendations resulting from the external evaluation (follow-up) (see the [Post-evaluation monitoring procedure](#)).

Selection and training of experts

In carrying out external evaluation activities, ANACEC involves various categories of experts that it selects from its own [Register of expert evaluators](#) (following the [application](#) and training process), thus ensuring the realization of an external evaluation process in a professional, objective, and independent manner. The process of recruitment and selection of expert evaluators is carried out in accordance with the provisions of the [Methodology for the selection of expert evaluators](#) and the criteria related to the professional and scientific skills of the candidate. In the process of recruiting and co-opting expert evaluators, the Agency ensures that the recruited experts have recognized professional skills, meet the [competence standard for the external evaluator](#), and have successfully completed the [training](#) stage carried out by the VET and CTE Department.

Members of the external evaluation panel must be independent, not represent the interests of the organization they belong to or of other third parties, comply with the [Code of Professional Ethics](#), confirm the lack of conflicts of interest by signing the *Declaration on their own responsibility on the lack of conflicts of interest* and must keep information confidential.

The training of expert evaluators is a mandatory component of the external quality evaluation process, with the aim of developing and ensuring the necessary skills of experts to promote the objectivity and consistency of the Agency's decisions. The training of expert evaluators is carried out through initiation/benchmark sessions, special/thematic training sessions and training courses. In order to ensure the effectiveness of the training approach, the training activities are focused on training/strengthening the evaluation skills of experts and are interactive. Thus, all types of training carried out by the Agency, suppose participants' familiarization with various topics such as: regulatory framework provisions, rights and obligations of evaluators, rules of ethical conduct, the use of external evaluation tools (Site visit record sheet, Guidelines for External Evaluation), the external evaluation report, as well as the full capitalization on their professional and evaluation experience.

Follow-up procedure

A mandatory element in the external evaluation process is the post-evaluation monitoring (follow-up) in order to establish the level of implementation of the recommendations and mandatory improvement areas, specified in the external evaluation report as a result of the findings made during the evaluation. The [Post-evaluation monitoring procedure](#) describes the steps that educational institutions undertake in the post-evaluation period to improve the quality of study programmes/institutional quality. On the VET dimension, the *Post-evaluation monitoring procedure* is applied by VET and CTE Department. Accordingly, educational institutions initiate and carry out, at the end of the external evaluation process, corrective/preventive actions to eliminate the non-conformities detected in the external evaluation

⁴ Governing Board decisions are publicly available, in Romanian

⁵ The external evaluation reports are publicly available, in Romanian

process or to prevent possible future non-conformities. The educational institutions develop, within up to 6 months, from the approval of the decisions by the Governing Board, Corrective Action Plans based on the mandatory improvement areas and the recommendations formulated by the external evaluation panel members, with the indication of those responsible and the deadlines. Corrective and preventive measures are designed and implemented by educational institutions during the validity of the decision on the authorization of provisional operation or accreditation of the study programmes/educational institution. Afterwards, the educational institution prepares a Report on the implementation of the corrective measures plan, which is presented to the specialized department of the Agency. Based on the Reports on the implementation of the corrective measures plan, VET and CTE Department formulates preliminary conclusions regarding the progress/results of the educational institution's implementation of the improvement areas/recommendations proposed by the external evaluation panel.

2. “Evaluation of the applicability and relevance of the evaluation standards (Annexes 2 and 3 to the Methodology of external evaluation, also included in the Guidelines) in line with the EQAVET indicators, regarding the external evaluation of VET programs and VET institutions”

While the Methodology describes the entire procedure of external evaluation, the drafting of the self-evaluation report and external evaluation report, based on each accreditation standard, criterion and performance indicator is described in the:

1. [Guidelines for the external evaluation of VET programs](#)
2. [Guidelines for the external evaluation of VET institutions](#)

These Guidelines are an updated version developed based on the *Methodology of external quality evaluation for the authorization of provisional operation and accreditation of vocational education and training, higher education and professional continuous training study programmes and institutions* (Annexes 2 and 3).

In drafting the Guidelines, national and European educational standards, national and international best practices in the field were taken into account. In order to ensure the quality of the elaborated document, the opinions of the VET institutions, the profile committee in VET of ANACEC, as well as of other stakeholders were consulted.

The external quality evaluation is performed based on the provisions of the Education Code, the accreditation standards, the criteria and performance indicators established in the Methodology of External Evaluation, as well as the evaluation standards and the mandatory minimum evaluation standards set out in these Guidelines. Accreditation standards comply with national and international reference documents.

The accreditation standard is a set of requirements that define the mandatory minimum level of performance of activities by an organization providing education. Accreditation standards are formulated in terms of rules or results, in the form of a statement, are differentiated by evaluation criteria and are specified in a set of performance indicators, evaluation standards and mandatory minimum evaluation standards.

There are 10 accreditation standards:

1. Policy for quality assurance
2. Design and approval of programmes
3. Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment

4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification
5. Teaching staff
6. Learning resources and student support
7. Information management
8. Public information
9. On-going monitoring and periodic review
10. Cyclical external quality assurance

Each accreditation standard is detailed through evaluation criteria, performance indicators and evaluation standards specific for VET.

The evaluation criteria represent performance levels, through which the possibilities of achieving certain standards and / or objectives, which are specific to each accreditation standard, are examined. One or more performance indicators and a certain number of points correspond to each criterion.

The performance indicator is the measuring instrument that indicates the characteristics of a certain criterion for evaluating the quality of the VET study programme and the activity of the educational institution. The way of manifestation and the level of achievement of each performance indicator is reflected by the evaluation standard.

The Guidelines also include a section / column with the evaluation standards, that are approved by the Governing Board of ANACEC, and are used as a benchmark for the self-evaluation and external evaluation process, based on which the external evaluation results and the decisions (authorisation of provisional operation, accreditation, re-accreditation) are made.

The evaluation standard is formulated by a statement, reflects the requirements / exigencies imposed on the quality of the VET study programme and the activity of the educational institution, and allows the determination of the level of achievement of these requirements. It describes quantitatively and / or qualitatively, with a certain level of detail, the requirements, and conditions to be met. The evaluation standards are of three types:

- *measurable* – are expressed in percentages or in specific units (e.g., number of students, number of teaching and scientific staff (divided into categories: full-time, internal part-time, external part-time employment, etc.), number of publications, number of research / community projects, patents / titles of protection for intellectual property objects, computing units, etc.), square meters, coefficients / indices (student promotion rate), etc.;
- *bivalent attributes* – assessed by "yes" or "no" (e.g., the existence of some normative documents, strategies, plans, reports, subdivisions of the institution, laboratories, minutes, etc.);
- *multivalent attributes* – assessed by quality levels. They are applied in the case of assessment of compliance with some qualitative conditions, which cannot be expressed quantitatively (e.g., the institution has an internal quality assurance system: a) functional and effective; b) partially functional and effective; c) non-functional).

Each evaluation standard is rated with points:

- a) *1,0 point* – is offered if the requirements of the evaluation standard are fully met (for qualitative requirements) or the level of achievement of the requirements is higher (for quantitative requirements);

b) *0,5 points* – are offered if the requirements of the evaluation standard are partially met (for qualitative requirements) or the level of achievement of the requirements is admissible (for quantitative requirements);

c) *0 points* – are offered if the requirements of the evaluation standard are not met (for qualitative requirements) or the achievement of the requirements is below the minimum admissible level (for quantitative requirements).

Each performance indicator is assessed by 1-3 evaluation standards, to which a certain weight is assigned. The calculation of the score is performed for each performance indicator and accreditation standard, based on the score awarded and the established weight. They allow the calculation of the score for each performance indicator and accreditation standard. Some performance indicators include *mandatory minimum evaluation standards* (MMES). The mandatory minimum evaluation standards are established in accordance with the national normative documents or international practices in the field and impose minimum acceptable and mandatory requirements on the performance indicator that reflects the quality of the study programme. The full fulfilment of all MMES is a mandatory condition to obtain the authorization of provisional operation / accreditation / re-accreditation of the externally evaluated VET study programme or VET institution.

These evaluation standards are developed based on the national and European requirements for quality assurance in VET. As these requirements may change, the evaluation standards may also change and amendments can be made more easily (by decision of the Governing Board of ANACEC).

In the case of external evaluation for the purpose of *accreditation / re-accreditation* of VET study programmes or VET institutions, all accreditation standards, criteria, and performance indicators set out in these Guidelines shall apply.

In the case of external evaluation for the *authorization of provisional operation* of VET study programmes or VET institutions, the accreditation standards, criteria, and performance indicators specified in these Guidelines shall apply, except for those indicated with the remark “Does not apply in the case of external evaluation for the authorization of provisional operation”.

As these Guidelines are also used for the drafting of the self-evaluation and external evaluation reports, they include a section on the guiding questions / aspects to be included / described in the self-evaluation report and a list of reference documents (both national ones that cover a specific aspect, and possible institutional ones that could be provided as documented evidence). Here is an example:

e.g., Accreditation standard 9. Continuous monitoring and periodic evaluation of professional training programs (16.0 pts.)

Institutions regularly monitor and evaluate the programs they offer to ensure that they achieve their goals and meet the needs of students and society. These evaluations lead to continuous improvement of the programs. Any measures planned or implemented as a result of the evaluation are communicated to all stakeholders.

Criterion 9.2. Employment

Performance indicator	Reference documents (RD)/ Content of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER)	Evaluation standards	Weight (points)
9.2.1. Institutional	RD:	1.0 – the VET institution has and applies institutional	

<p>mechanisms for recording the employment of graduates of the professional training program (Does not apply in the case of external evaluation for authorization of provisional operation)</p>	<p>1. SM ISO 29990:2016 Formal and non-formal education services. Basic requirements for education providers.</p> <p>2. Decision of the Government of the Republic of Moldova no. 923 of 04.09.2001 regarding the employment of graduates of state specialized higher and secondary education institutions.</p> <p>3. Procedures for recording the employment and professional development of the graduates of the professional training program in the field of work.</p> <p>4. The database of the employment of graduates of the professional training program according to the obtained qualification and their professional development.</p> <p>SER:</p> <p>Analysis of the institutional procedures for recording the employment and professional development of the graduates of the professional training program for the last 5 years.</p>	<p>procedures for recording the employment and professional development of the graduates of the professional training program;</p> <p>0.5 – the VET institution has institutional procedures for recording employment, but does not have records of the professional development of the graduates of the professional training program;</p> <p>0 – the VET institution does not apply procedures for recording the professional path of the graduates of the professional training program.</p>	<p>1.0</p>
---	--	---	------------

SWOT analysis of the quality assurance in VET measure:

Selected quality assurance measure:	
<p>Strengths (internal)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ANACEC – nationally and internationally recognized institution. 2. One methodology of external evaluation applied for VET, higher education and continuous training, but different, education level specific standards applied. 3. The efforts of VET institutions to continuously improve the functionality of VET professional training programs, to consolidate the teaching-learning-assessment process, the technical-material base, etc. following the external evaluation based on the recommendations for improvement received. 4. Granting places for Admission to the authorized for provisional operation/accredited programs. 5. Conducting the external evaluation by independent expert evaluators (co-opted and paid by ANACEC). 6. Motivating evaluated institutions/expert evaluators by awarding recognition diplomas, the quality crystal for the best experts, institutions, programs. 7. Clear criteria for the selection and recruitment of expert evaluators. 8. Comprehensive training of expert evaluators. 	<p>Weaknesses (internal)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Agency is not totally independent (being subordinated to the MER), so in the Methodology for external evaluation of study programs/educational institutions, interventions (changes are made) contrary to the Agency's vision, although the Education Code mentions the Agency's prerogatives. 2. The MER, contrary to the provisions of the methodology of external evaluation, sometimes grants budgetary places to institutions for programs that were not authorized for provisional operation. 3. Small number of employees (due to unattractive salary) in the VET Department of ANACEC. 4. The difficulty of identifying expert evaluators in some VET fields, including due to the unattractive payment.

9. Consistent follow-up procedure.	
<p>Opportunities (external)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dissemination of good practices of VET institutions, also by including the representatives of VET institutions as expert evaluators in the evaluation process. 2. Strengthening the relations between the educational institution and the business institutions by involving expert evaluators in the external evaluation process from the real sector. 3. External evaluation of a number of study programs from the same field of training (in terms of the costs incurred by the VET institution). 	<p>Threats (external)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The risk of diminishing or even losing interest of VET institutions for the external evaluation of the programs, due to the allocation by the MER of budgetary places for non-authorized / non-accredited programs. 2. The risk of non-compliance with the terms of conducting external evaluations (small number of ANACEC staff).

(D) Special assessment questions for Forum peers

Questions on the QA measure for individual feedback:

1. To what extent is the external evaluation procedure described by the Methodology of external evaluation effective for the VET external QA process? What are its strengths and weaknesses?
2. How effective is the external evaluation of separate study programs/group of study programs by field of professional training vs. institutional evaluation?
3. Is the decision-making process applied and the final decisions made (authorization / non-authorization for provisional operation, accreditation/non-accreditation) conducive to achieving the overall objective of the external evaluation process of continuous improvement of quality in VET?
4. Are the evaluation standards (included in the Guidelines) achievable, applicable and relevant for the VET sector?
5. Are the evaluation standards (included in the Guidelines) in line with the EQAVET indicators, regarding the external evaluation of VET programs and VET institutions?

Please, base your answer on your personal experience/expertise and the discussions held with the different stakeholders.

Questions to the peers about their contexts (if applicable):

1. Do you perform separate study programme, group of study programs by field of professional training and/or institutional external evaluations? To what extent are they different and is this effective for ensuring the continuous improvement of quality in VET?
2. How is the institutional external evaluation conducted in your country (please elaborate on the process and the evaluation/quality standards applied)?
3. How is the selection and training of expert evaluators done in your contexts?
4. What is your follow-up procedure and how is it carried out?
5. How do you ensure the efficient organization and conduct of the site visit?

6. Please, elaborate on the decision-making process and final decisions made as a result of an external evaluation procedure in your context.
7. In the case of re-accreditation, do you apply a different procedure of external evaluation of VET study programs and/or institutions, different standards? Please elaborate on this.

(E) Initial plans to provide feedback to the peers on the usage of the feedback and/or for improvement (Follow-up)⁶

Following the ETF peer visit ANACEC will:

- analyse the individual and joint feedback and recommendations received from the peers and discuss them within the agency;
- include relevant recommendations in the workplan of the agency and the specialized department;
- inform the stakeholders on the feedback received by publishing the report on its website and disseminating it via emails and social networking sites;
- use the recommendations as a basis for formulating next amendments to the methodology of external evaluation to be considered by MER when submitting it for Government approval;
- if applicable and relevant for the national context, amendments to the evaluation standards will be proposed for discussion with stakeholders and approval by the Governing Board of the Agency.

(F) Annex

If appropriate: Annex documents that will help peers to get a complete and adequate impression of the quality assurance measure to be assessed. References to these documents will allow you to keep your national context report short. Only annex documents or links in **English language versions**. You are also recommended to annex your Peer Visit initial information sheet in this section.

Provide a **list of documents**:

1. Regulation on the organization and operation of ANACEC
2. Internal regulation of ANACEC
3. Methodology of external evaluation
4. Methodology of external evaluation_Annex 2
5. Methodology of external evaluation_Annex 3
6. Guidelines for the external evaluation of VET institutions
7. Guidelines for the external evaluation of VET programs
8. Regulation on the involvement of stakeholders
9. Regulation on the profile committees
10. Methodology for the selection of expert evaluators

⁶ The host Forum member institution may describe how it plans to work with the results of the peer feedback. This may include initial ideas for improvements according to the quality cycle (Plan-Do-Check-Act).

11. Methodology for training the expert evaluators of ANACEC
12. Post-evaluation monitoring procedure (follow-up)
13. Regulation on the settlement of petitions submitted to ANACEC

Links:

<https://anacec.md/en/content/legislation-2> (many documents of the Agency available in English)

<https://mec.gov.md/ro/content/invatamantul-profesional-tehnic> (documents regulating VET available in Romanian)

https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=133296&lang=ro# (Education Code - available in Romanian and Russian)

<https://anacec.md/en/video> (promotional videos describing ANACEC processes – in Romanian, Russian, and one with English subtitles)