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**Policy Paper on Quality Assurance and Management in Vocational Secondary Schools Ministry of Education, Jordan**

**By**

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Contents

[1.Introduction 3](#_Toc5115165)

[2. Policy context and methodology 4](#_Toc5115166)

[3. Quality Assurance Management System for the ETVET Sector 6](#_Toc5115167)

[3.1 The purposes and principles of an integrated QAM system in vocational secondary schools 7](#_Toc5115168)

[3.2 Description of the Six Components of QAMS 8](#_Toc5115169)

[3.3.3. Validation of Qualifications 9](#_Toc5115170)

[3.3.4. Learning and Teaching 9](#_Toc5115171)

[3.3.5. Competence Assessment and Verification 10](#_Toc5115172)

[3.3.6. Certification 10](#_Toc5115173)

[4. Policy Statements 11](#_Toc5115174)

[4.1 Quality assurance is compulsory 11](#_Toc5115175)

[4.2 External assessment and accreditation 11](#_Toc5115176)

[4.3 Benchmarks 12](#_Toc5115177)

[5. QA procedures for the vocational secondary schools 12](#_Toc5115178)

[5.1 Planning and design 12](#_Toc5115179)

[5.2 Internal monitoring and verification 13](#_Toc5115180)

[5.3 self-assessment: 13](#_Toc5115181)

[5.4 Identifying necessary revisions 13](#_Toc5115182)

[5.6. Step by step Procedure to achieve the quality of TVET schools in Jordan according to CAQA standards: 13](#_Toc5115183)

[References 14](#_Toc5115186)

**(DRAFT for Discussion)**

**Policy Paper on**

**Quality Assurance and Management in Vocational Secondary Schools**

**Ministry of Education, Jordan**

# 1.Introduction

To assure the quality of qualifications offered in the Secondary Vocational Schools in Jordan and to continuously improve this quality goal, a Quality Assurance and Quality Management (QAM) policy is necessary. This draft policy discussion paper outlines the essence of such a policy, it defines the key policy statements and procedures which define the proposed Quality Assurance and Management System (QAMS) and its related policy.

This draft policy is based on the overall QAMS framework developed by Component 3 WG members[[1]](#footnote-1) which is “quality assurance of qualifications” and the National Qualifications Framework- Jordan[[2]](#footnote-2). Establishing a common integrated QAM system for the whole ETVET Sector including secondary vocational schools within by the Ministry of Education (MoE) remit, will lead to synergy among other subsectors of Education and Training in Jordan.

To enhance Jordan’s global competitiveness and to respond to the increasing demand for relevant skills and competitiveness from the Labour market, a fundamental shift is required in the provision of technical and vocational education and training (TVET), including at the secondary level calls for a competence based and learner-centered approach to learning and teaching, accepting flexible learning paths and opportunities for life-long learning at higher levels.

# 2. Policy context and methodology

This policy is built onrelevant policies and strategies on education and training in Jordan including Ministry of Education (MoE) Strategy, HRD Strategy 2016- 2025, E-TVET Strategy 2015-2020, TVET law (2019), National Qualification Framework (2018), and the QA standards by the Center of Accreditation and Quality Assurance (CAQA).

Furthermore, policy priorities were discussed with various stakeholders including staff at the relevant departments of MoE (TVET and QA), 60 principals from all the 3 regions in Jordan. The experts also carried out site visits to select schools to establish the current realities at the schools themselves.

The development of this document and the capacity building of national actors in this area is part of the EU financed project EU Funded Project “Technical Assistance to the Skills for Employment and Social Inclusion Programme”. This will be done through assist all Accreditation Bodies to implement common accreditation principles and approaches for the whole TVET sector of curricula that responds to the needs of the economy, the society and individuals in line with international best practices

This policy is specifically for vocational secondary streams and that it should be further aligned to general secondary QA processes/procedures

**Terminologies**

***Quality***

The totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs". In simpler words, one can say that a product has good quality when it "complies with the requirements specified by the client

***Quality Assurance***

Processes and procedures for ensuring that qualifications, assessment and programme delivery meet certain standards.

***Internal Quality Assurance***

A process to review the practice against documented procedures usually carried out by stakeholders within the organization. Also known as internal quality audit in some literature.

*(****Continuous) Quality improvement***

The actions taken, continuously and periodically, to increase the value to the customers (in TVET, learners and employers) by improving the effectiveness and efficiency of processes and activities throughout the organizational processes and structure.

***Quality Management System (QMS)***

A quality management system (QMS) is a formalized system that documents processes, procedures, and responsibilities for achieving quality policies and objectives. A QMS helps coordinate and direct an organization’s activities to meet customer and regulatory requirements and improve its effectiveness and efficiency on a continuous basis

***Verification (of Assessment)***

The process by which the validity of the assessment process is ensured (i.e., the checks and balances in the assessment system to ensure that what should happen when people are assessed, does happen). Its primary purpose is quality assurance, confirming that people in different places are assessed in the same way, with a common interpretation of the standards. There are two levels of verification: Individual (or technical) Verification – ensures employee competence by checking individual assessments undertaken by the Verifier, and Process or System Verification – ensures a systematic process is established and procedures are followed.

***Evidence***

It is a proof of any fact or information including data. In VET, evidence in the context of competence assessment and verification, is the information gathered and matched against a unit of competency to provide proof of competency. The three most common types of evidence are: observation, work products and replies to (oral and written) questions.

***TVET Quality***

The quality of technical vocational education and training is a set of characteristics of a TVET programme / competency based training and of its provider, through which mandatory standards set by **CAQA** and other agencies in charge as well as stakeholder and labour market expectations are met. TVET quality relates to the achievement of the outcomes and competencies (**knowledge, skills and attitudes**) as described in the **Jordan National Qualifications Framework** fulfilling the expectations of trainees and apprentices, families, employers, community and The Jordanian nation.

***Certificate***

An official document, issued by an awarding body, which records the achievements of an individual following a standard assessment procedure.

A responsive and *fit-for-purpose* QAMS establishes policies, predefined quality standards, assures the quality of the inputs, processes and outcomes of TVET in Jordan.

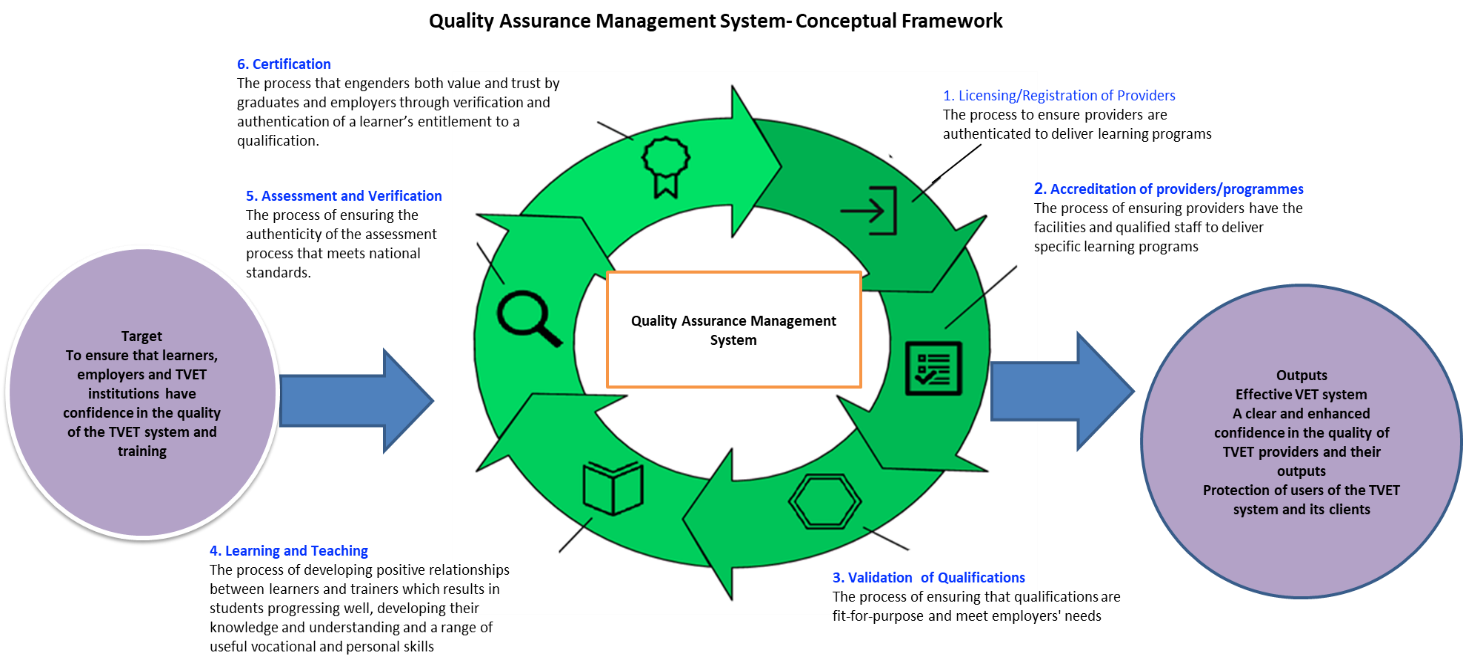
In this context, the term ‘quality assurance’ is used in this document to describe all activities within the continuous improvement cycle (i.e. assurance and enhancement activities). This paper reaffirms that at the core of all quality assurance activities are the twin purposes of ***accountability*** and ***enhancement*** through a culture of continuous improvement.

***Stakeholders*** are understood to include all actors within a training TVET secondary school, including learners and staff, as well as external stakeholders such as employers, regulatory bodies and other external partners of this TVET secondary school.

# 3. Quality Assurance Management System for the ETVET Sector

The MoE will implement, within its Vocational Secondary Schools (VSS), a comprehensive QAM System aligned to the following six components benchmarked on international best practices:

1. Licensing
2. Accreditation (institutions and programmes)
3. Validation of Qualifications
4. Learning and Teaching
5. Competence Assessment and Verification
6. Certification.



**Figure 1: Quality Assurance Management System (QAMS) in the E-TVET Sector in Jordan – Conceptual Framework**

## 3.1 The purposes and principles of an integrated QAM system in vocational secondary schools

Quality assurance is a component of quality management and is ‘focused on providing confidence that quality requirements will be fulfilled’.

This policy sets out the strategic direction and implementation guidelines for an effective quality assurance mechanism, including quality assurance procedures and processes for vocational secondary schools in Jordan. The policy takes into account that the three interrelated components:

* Internal Quality Assurance (IQA)
* External Quality Assurance (EQA); and,
* Quality Assurance Agency (CAQA).

Internal quality assurance is solely the responsibility of the vocational secondary schools concerned drawn from the national QA standards (of CAQA) and other regulatory requirements.

External quality assurance is carried out with experts/reviewers who are either staff or external experts of CAQA or relevant departments from MoE (TVET and QA departments).

The QA assurance agency develops QA standards and its implementation mechanism for external quality assurance based on stakeholder agreement on national standards.

Taking the overall context of the ETVET sector, the vocational secondary school Quality Assurance and Management system is underpinned with the following characteristics:

* They facilitate the development of an Integrated and common framework for the vocational secondary schools in Jordan, based on the principle of ‘quality assurance of qualifications’ and aligned to the QAMS in the ETVET Sector
* They enable the assurance and continuous improvement of quality of employment driven technical and vocational education and training
* They support mutual trust, thus facilitating recognition and mobility within and across the sub sectors of education both nationally and internationally
* They provide information and advocacy for continuous quality assurance in the sector.
* This integrated approach to a common framework will provide stimulus to different ways of implementation by different institutions (general and vocational) within the country and regionally.

## 3.2 Description of the Six Components of QAMS

**3.2.1 Licensing**

This is the authority given by the MoE to establish and implement vocational secondary streams.

**3.2.2. Accreditation**

**3.2.2.1 Programmes Accreditation**

Accreditation of a programme (within the Qualification package) will ensure that the relevant qualification gets national recognition by which the complexity and learning outcomes are validated by defined standards. In order to align to the National Qualifications Framework, the ***Programme*** will be an integral part of the ***Qualification[[3]](#footnote-3)***.

Accreditation of Programmes (qualifications) means that that the design and content of the qualification will meet the quality **Standards** required for recognition at a national level.

This will be carried out jointly with CAQA and relevant experts from the respective economic sectors in consultation with the Technical and Vocational Skill Development Commission.

**3.2.2.2 Institutional Accreditation**

Institutional accreditation by the MoE vocational secondary schools entail the achievement of CAQA or other accrediting agency quality standards, which are nationally set and agreed. Within each standard there will be a list of criteria or indicators which the institution must meet to satisfy the external officer/team carrying out the accreditation activity.

The MOE VSS will work closely with CAQA to apply the accreditation standards by CAQA, which consists of the following five **performance areas and 80 standards:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Performance Area** | **Number of Standards** |
| Leadership and Quality Management (LM) | 19 standards |
| Management of Resources and Environment (RE) | 18 standards |
| Qualification (programme) development | 16 standards |
| Learning and Teaching (LT) | 19 standards |
| Engagement with community and regulatory bodies (R) | 8 standards |

## 3.3.3. Validation of Qualifications

Validation ensures that a qualification is **fit-for-purpose**.

The focus of validation on proving that there is a demonstrated need for the new qualification in the labour market. Once the qualification has been validated, the qualification may be accredited and included in the NQF.

A request for the validation of a qualification may come from a MoE VSS in response to a demand for a new qualification from an employer in a particular sector.

A request for the validation of qualifications may also come from the Ministry of Labour (MoL) or the Ministry of Education (MoE) or Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE), because they wish to rationalize the number and fragmentation of courses and programmes and qualifications, throughout the VET sector, into a suite of nationally recognized qualifications which can be accredited.

## 3.3.4. Learning and Teaching

These are core activities which take place in at the MoE VSS. The learning and teaching will be competence based curriculum described in terms of Learning Outcomes. Therefore, it is very important to focus on **how** and **what** the student **learns** and not only on the information and practical work demonstrated by the Trainer.

The ***Learning Outcomes*** must be linked to the skills, knowledge and attitudes expected by employers in the Labour market. For this reason, it is very important that trainers themselves have the appropriate skills, knowledge and attitudes for the sector for which they are training.

## 3.3.5. Competence Assessment and Verification (CAV)

**3.3.5.1 Competence Assessment**

Accurate assessment of student performance is critical to the success of the quality management system for VSS.

Assessment therefore must be reliable, valid and evidence based. If the assessment decision is accurate and reliable then the data which will be used to issue the Certificates will also reflect accurately what the graduate is capable of doing.

The MoE will facilitate both formative and summative assessment in order to assist the learner to progress effectively until the award of a qualification.

**3.3.5.2 Verification (internal and external):**

Verification of assessment is a necessary ‘checking process’ in the quality management system.

**3.3.5.2.1 Internal verification**

A first step in the verification of assessment is the internal verification. Through this process a verifier, appointed by the VSS, will work together with the assessor to ensure that the assessment instrument, to be used, is valid and reliable and meets the performance **Standards** of the Learning Outcomes.

The internal verifier will then do an initial check on the written assessment results (or observe in a practical assessment scenario) to make sure that the assessment results will be favorably received by the external verifier.

**3.3.5.2.2 External verification**

An assessor’s judgement will be verified by another subject-competent person, external to the MoE[[4]](#footnote-4). It will be during or after summative assessments and before student results are finally processed.

## 3.3.6. Certification

Upon successful completion of the qualification by the students, the MoE will issue a formal certificate called ***Tawjihi*** (comprehensive secondary certificate). The VSS graduates will also be eligible for a competence certificate from CAQA at Level 4 for his/her specific specialisation.

In terms of quality assurance for every Certificate issued it will be based on **accurate information**, which in turn is based on the **accurate and monitored judgement** based on evidence demonstrated through a competence assessment, so that the description on the certificate matches what the graduate is capable of performing.

Certification and related data will be integrated within the MoE management information system.

# 4. Policy Statements

## 4.1 Quality assurance is compulsory

*Every Vocational Secondary School licensed by MoE should have a quality assurance management system aligned to the national QA standards established by CAQA.*

This implies that:

* 1. the TVET Directorate will establish a QA management team of 7 experts, chaired by the Director of TVET Department with members from other MoE Departments, CAQA, employer representatives and at least 2 principals (one from the private sector owned VSS).
  2. VSSs will have systems and staff in place to conduct ongoing self-assessment and following that annual planning to improve quality. A short quality report (based on a standardised format to be developed jointly with CAQA) will be delivered to MoE TVET Directorate annually, as part of the performance report.
  3. Implementing effective self-assessment by VSSs, MoE will facilitate adequate methodological support with CAQA jointly with the MoE regional offices.

## 4.2 External assessment and accreditation[[5]](#footnote-5)

*In order to be independently quality assured, MoE will facilitate CAQA accreditation for all VSSs. Further to national accreditation by CAQA, VSSs are encouraged to explore international accreditation where feasible in discussion with the concerned MoE Department.*

*This implies that:*

1. external accreditation and reaccreditation by CAQA must take place at least every 5 years.
2. further to submission of the self-assessment report and application for accreditation, CAQA will initiate the accreditation procedure as per its standards.
3. if the VSSs meet the expectations of the CAQA standards, verified through an external assessment and evidence, accreditation will be granted.
4. if a VSS does not (yet) meet the criteria, it must deliver an improvement plan and request to postpone the accreditation for 1 year.

## 4.3 Benchmarks

Self-Assessment and External Assessment will take place against agreed benchmarks for quality of Vocational Secondary Schools.

Benchmarks serve as a standard of quality to be achieved. They can be defined both in quantitative terms and in qualitative terms. Examples of quantitative benchmarks/ standards are[[6]](#footnote-6):

* Participation rate (as % of academic and vocational streams disaggregated)
* Completion rate (as % of number of Learners entering programme that completed the programme successfully)
* Pass-rate (as % of Learners that entered final assessment and passed)
* Drop-out rate, as % of learners that leave school before assessment in a given year.
* Number of contacts with industry per programme

# 5. QA procedures for the vocational secondary schools

**This policy** acknowledges **two critical factors** in order to implement an effective and efficient QAMS within VSS:

1. **Considerable and comprehensive capacity development** and training at all levels including within the coordination departments and the management and trainers in the VSSs.
2. **NQF** will be the **reference point** for all the 6 QA components.

MoE will work closely with the QA regulatory bodies of CAQA and MoE QA Department to facilitate the institutional accreditation of all VSSs.

## 5.1 Planning and design

All activities to establish the main objectives in quality of VSS MoE provision, as well as the necessary resources and means, through:

* strategic planning: setting up general objectives regarding QA;
* operational planning: setting up of activities, of necessary resources and means, allocation of terms and responsibilities;
* connecting the planned objectives and activities to the QMS of the TVET institution.

## 5.2 Internal monitoring and verification

Verifies whether the planned activities are carried out according to the agreed terms and responsibilities, and evaluates the teaching and learning process through lessons observations. Internal verification evaluates the TVET institution’s difficulties in attaining the established objectives, in the teaching and learning process, and in identifying appropriate solutions.

## 5.3 self-assessment (self-evaluation)

The main process in quality assurance, through which TVET institutions evaluate their performance based on evidence. Self-evaluation forms an integral part of internal quality culture, with results leading to specific improvements. Regular self - evaluations help to determine whether the quality management system is doing what it was designed to do, if it effective and maintained accordingly. The self-evaluation activities should be planned taking status and importance of the areas, departments units or processes to be evaluated into account. Thought must be given to **Standards** and methods applied and selection of internal evaluators to ensure objectivity and impartiality. Staff shall not audit its own organisational entity or process. The results of self-evaluations need to be recorded. The responsible process owners or management must ensure that necessary corrective actions are taken to address detected issues. Follow-up activities should include checking improvements.

5.4 Developing and maintaining the Quality Management Handbook

This includes the quality policy of the TVET institution, the procedures for quality assurance, internal QA procedures, decisions to allocate roles and responsibilities for QA etc. The quality management handbook describes the quality assurance (management) system of the respective TVET institution. A fully operational internal quality assurance system covers the basic quality related tasks and activities, applies a range of tools for assessment and analysis, illustrates and communicates plans and results achieved, and will promote a quality culture within the TVET institutions organization as well as work in partnership with the external stakeholders.

## 5.5. Step by step Procedure to achieve the quality of TVET schools in Jordan according to CAQA standards:

* + 1. Review vision, mission and core values;
    2. Implementation of self - assessment according to CAQA standards;
    3. Analyse the current status of vocational secondary schools according to the results of self-assessment;
    4. Define performance gaps;
    5. Develop a strategic plan to improve the perceptions of vocational secondary schools according to the results of self-assessment;
    6. Develop a follow-up plan;
    7. Implementation of the institutional performance improvement plan;
    8. Evaluation of the performance improvement plan after its completion;
    9. Final revision of self-evaluation according to CAQA standards;
    10. Submit self-evaluation report to CAQA;
    11. Get ready to visit the review team from CAQA;
    12. CAQA shall determine the shortcomings of the vocational secondary schools for its treatment;
    13. The vocational secondary school determines the time required to remedy deficiencies
    14. Prepare the institutional performance improvement plan;
    15. 5.5.515 Submit the final report to the Accreditation and Quality Control Center.

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1. Representing 12 institutions/key stakeholders including MoE which has been set up by the ETVET Council. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The NQF is governed by the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education Institutions (AQACHEI). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The *Tajiki* qualification includes the competence standards, learning and teaching methodology/framework, and assessment standards which are aligned to the general education. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. This will be carried out jointly with the assessment department [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. It is recommended to make this accreditation of the VSS part of a performance contract that every VSS should undertake with the MoE for budget related approvals. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. With reference to a performance contract between MoE and VSSs. These can be set in absolute terms as performance criterion, or as targets to strive for. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)