

## **EQUAL-CLASS: Engineers qualified in higher non-university VET institutions – providing arguments and evidence for NQF/EQF classification**

*Project Number* 2012-1-AT1-LEO05-06968



*Year* 2012

*Project Type* Transfer of Innovation

*Status* granted

*Country* AT-Austria

**Marketing** EQUAL-CLASS aims to study the qualifications in the field of mechatronics/electrical engineering that can be obtained in higher non-university VET institutions or comparable institutions in AT, CH, DE, LT, and PT. The project analyses qualifications from several different angles: curricula, students, and graduates. To this end, the EQUAL-CLASS project will transfer the methodology developed in the previous ZOOM project.

The EQUAL-CLASS project will offer an example of how similar qualifications from different countries can be described in a comparable way. It will contribute to the creation of mutual trust and understanding through transparency and comparability among European countries and in the European labour market. Improved transparency and better comparability of qualifications as well as the consideration of work experience following graduation (validation of non-formal/informal learning) will promote the cooperation between VET and the labour market.

**Summary** The EQUAL-CLASS project will focus on qualifications in the field of mechatronics/electrical engineering, which can be achieved in higher non-university VET institutions or comparable institutions in the following countries: AT, CH, DE, LT, PT. Therefore, the EQUAL-CLASS project, as a Transfer of Innovation project, aims to transfer the methodology developed in the previous ZOOM project.

ZOOM developed methodology to support an objective and unambiguous classification of qualifications in the respective NQFs. EQUAL-CLASS, where applicable, will adapt and revise the classification principles, methodology and guidelines. In addition, qualifications can be compared by using the Competence Matrices developed in the VQTS project [[www.vocationalqualification.net](http://www.vocationalqualification.net)].

The EQUAL-CLASS project will offer an example of how similar qualifications from different countries can be described in a comparable way. It will contribute to the creation of mutual trust and understanding through transparency and comparability among European countries and in the European labour market. Transparency and better comparability of qualifications as well as the consideration of work experience following graduation (validation of non-formal/informal learning) will enhance the cooperation between VET and the labour market.

### ***The main aims of the EQUAL-CLASS project are:***

- transferring - adapting and further developing - the ZOOM methodology for describing qualifications [<http://www.zoom-eqf.eu/>];
- comparing qualifications in the field of mechatronics/electrical engineering in regards to their learning

outcomes;

- using 'Remote Labs' (online laboratories to remotely conduct real experiments) as a reality check to gain further evidence for the knowledge, skills and competence of students of those qualifications;
- using a graduate survey as another reality check for identifying and analysing occupations and positions of graduates of those qualifications;
- elaborating to what extent relevant professional experience acquired after a VET programme justifies another - higher - qualification; i.e. the definition of a new qualification that can be allocated to a higher NQF level;

The core partnership consists of research organisations in the field of VET and NQF/EQF, higher non-university VET institutions and a network of VET providers. They are supported by associated partners: ministries, chambers, European and national associations of VET providers and enterprises.

**Description** The EQUAL-CLASS project will focus on qualifications in the field of mechatronics/electrical engineering that can be achieved in higher non-university VET institutions or comparable institutions in the following countries: Austria, Switzerland, Germany, Lithuania, Portugal. Therefore, the EQUAL-CLASS project, which is a Transfer of an Innovation project, aims to transfer the methodology developed in the previous ZOOM project.

The EQUAL-CLASS project focuses on engineers' qualifications from higher non-university VET institutions or comparable institutions in the partner countries and their (non-formal/informal) competences acquired in the labour market.

The main aims of the EQUAL-CLASS project are:

- adapt, test and further develop a comprehensive methodology for describing qualifications (based on the ZOOM template);
- compare qualifications in the field of mechatronics with regard to their learning outcomes in the emerging NQFs and their links to EQF levels;
- use 'Remote Labs' (i.e. online laboratories to remotely conduct real experiments) as a reality check to gain further evidence for the knowledge, skills and competence of learners or graduates in the previously mentioned fields;
- identify and analyse occupations and positions of graduates of higher non-university VET programmes in those fields in AT, CH, DE, LT, PT;
- elaborate to what extent relevant professional experience acquired after a VET programme justifies another - higher - qualification; i.e. the definition of a new qualification that can be allocated to a higher NQF level;

The EQUAL-CLASS project will provide an example of developing comparable descriptions of similar qualifications from different countries. It will help create mutual trust and understanding through transparency and comparability among countries and in the European labour market. Transparency and better comparability of qualifications as well as the consideration of work experience following graduation (validation of non-formal/informal learning) should enhance cooperation between VET and the labour market. By sharing relevant possibilities and experience from partner countries and by

jointly developing scenarios and recommendations, the project also contributes to a transnational understanding of how professional experience could be taken into account in the classification process. By means of exemplary analyses and discussion of the comparability of qualifications in the context of NQF and EQF, EQUAL-CLASS shall facilitate the transparency and recognition of these engineering qualifications.

Moreover, the two suggested reality checks - 'Remote Labs' and the graduate survey - on engineering students' competences and graduates' positions, occupations and experience will show relevant aspects of the engineering labour market.

*Themes* ● ● ● Labor market

● ● ● Recognition, transparency, certification

● ● ● Initial training

● ● Lifelong learning

● ● Continuous training

● ICT

*Sectors* ● ● ● Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities

● ● ● Education

● ● Manufacturing

● Information and Communication

### ***Dissemination/Valorisation***

EUpVET, the European Association of VET providers is the project partner responsible for dissemination and valorisation.

### ***Product Types*** others

website

*Product information* The main products of EQUAL-CLASS will be

- a comparative/analytical report containing feedback and recommendations on the ZOOM methodology
- documentation of the design and implementation of 'Remote Labs' (online laboratories to remotely conduct real experiments)
- an analytical report on the implementation of the 'Remote Labs'
- design and methodology for the graduate survey (questionnaire)
- comparative/analytical report on mechatronics/electrical engineering graduates
- a report on validation of non-formal/informal learning - scenarios and recommendations.