

Vocational and applied qualifications

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26 February 2009

14.00 and 15.10

**European systems of vocational education and
training (VET) –
The cases of England, France, Netherlands and
Germany**

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February 2010

European VET systems

- Nuffield-funded study: Cross-national equivalence of vocational skills and qualifications
 - Nuffield Review of Education Phase 14-19
 - European Qualifications Framework (EQF)
 - Three-year project (April 2006 – March 2009)
 - Cross-national: England, Germany, Netherlands, France
 - Case-study approach: four occupations in four sectors

European VET systems

- Aims of the project:
 - To explore the differences in understandings of qualifications and skills
 - To examine the meanings of terms and concepts, such as knowledge, skills, competence, training and education
 - To analyse the ways in which concepts are embedded and operationalised within the different national contexts
 - To identify the problems the differences pose to the integration within an EU framework
 - To develop criteria for comparability

European VET systems

- Methodology:
 - Literature review
 - Case study approach – 4 occupations in 4 sectors:
 - Nurses in Health
 - LGV drivers in Logistics
 - Software engineers in ICT
 - Bricklayers/masons in Construction
 - Transnational conceptual framework
 - Macro-level interviews (social partners, regulatory bodies)
 - Micro-level interviews (employers, training providers)

European VET systems

European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

- enhance comparability of qualifications, mobility of labour
- eight levels – 3 descriptors: knowledge, skills, competence

European VET systems

- Occupational model

- individual capacity within a broad occupational field (broad-based occupational, general and civic education)

- Skills-based model

- individual skills sets, meeting specific employer needs (minimal underpinning knowledge)

European VET systems

- **Governance**
 - social partnership versus voluntarist
- **Labour Market**
 - qualifications versus skills
- **Competence**
 - multi-dimensional versus functional
- **Education**
 - education versus training

European VET systems

- ‘Semi-profession’ – regulated occupation (nursing). A zone of mutual trust established through EU regulation, complemented by common structural changes.
- ‘Employability’ - new sector, weakly regulated (software engineering). Emergent mutual trust, operating through a combination of formal and informal practices, underpinned by global developments.
- Occupational versus skill-based model - traditional manual occupation (bricklaying). Zones of mistrust?

Bricklaying

1. *Different nature of occupation:*

- France = maçon
- Germany = main building *Beruf*
- Netherlands = secondary to carpentry occupation
- England = demarcated trade (mainly facing)

2. *Similarities of occupation*

- Traditional apprentice building trade
- Cross-national mobility/migration
- Health & safety risks (i.e. VET subject to EU regulation?)

Bricklaying: governance & VET

Continental

- Government sets framework
- Part of education
- Social partner + educationalist consensus
- Sector based CA
- Level 3/broad
- Alternance
- apprenticeship/ dual
- Citizenship/competences
- Broad to specialised
- 2-3 years
- VET school + firm + (D&NL) workshop

England

- SSCs
- Lack of industry/education integration
- employer-led
- Minimal TU/low CA input
- Narrow NVQ2
- Work-place based + FE
- Informal / apprenticeship
- Obtaining demarcated skills
- Unit-based
- 6 weeks+
- firm-based + day release

Bricklaying:

Labour market & competence

Continental

- Complex, broad activity range
- Pay qualification & CA related
- Strong identity (D) & low status/migrant (F & NL)
- Majority qualified
- High/medium career progression via CVET
- Broad core competencies + demonstrable UK
- Curriculum-based
- Competence based on activity analysis
- Comprehensive occupations
- Multi-dimensional & linked to individual development

England

- Narrow job/trade (laying bricks)
- Output/performance-based
- Low status/self-employed, labour-only
- Minority qualified
- Lack of permeability

- No civic/social element/ no demonstrable UK
- NVQ (not curriculum-related)
- Skill-based

- Demarcated trade
- Performance & task-related

Bricklaying: Disparate systems

Continental system	English system
Occupation embedded in sector	Trade
Broad competencies (knowledge, skills + personal development)	Narrow, bounded skills
VET	Training
Social partner-based	Employer-based

European VET systems

- **The semi-professional occupation: nursing**
 - social partnership model
 - qualification as a 'licence to practice'
 - European Directive 2005/36/EC for Health and Social Care Professions
 - 'professionalisation' of nursing
 - the changing role of nursing
 - education model
 - multi-dimensional model of competence

European VET systems

- **‘Employability’: software engineering**
 - absence of regulatory framework
 - (global) accelerated technological change
 - integration of IT into business sectors
 - broadened scope of activities and role
 - importance of social and personal competence
 - emphasis on workplace learning (initial and continuing vocational education and training)
 - trend from knowledge-based to competence-based?

European VET systems

- **Occupations versus skills**
- **Zones of mutual trust**
 - Regulation
 - Employability

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Table Discussion