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ENHANCING THE INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN UKRAINE: RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON THE DUTCH EXPERIENCE

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Abstract

Background. Developing effective internal quality assurance systems (IQAS) in vocational education institutions stands as a strategic priority of Ukraine's national educational policy in the context of European integration and post-war recovery. Despite an established legislative framework, domestic IQAS practice is characterized by excessive bureaucratization, a deficit in digital analytical culture, formal employer engagement, and low learner agency. Under these circumstances, an objective need arises to examine and adapt successful international experience, particularly that of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, which operates a balanced, decentralized vocational education quality model (MBO sector).

Aim. The aim of the study is to conduct a comparative institutional analysis of internal quality assurance systems for vocational education in Ukraine and the Netherlands, and, on this basis, to elaborate evidence-based practical recommendations for transforming the domestic IQAS model.

Methods. Theoretical methods: analysis, synthesis, systematization, and generalization to examine the regulatory and legal framework, methodological materials, and scholarly works of domestic and foreign researchers on quality assurance in vocational education; structural-functional analysis to explore the structure and interaction mechanisms of vocational education stakeholders in Ukraine (MES, SQE, NAES of Ukraine, VEIs) and the Dutch MBO system (Ministry of OCW, Education Inspectorate, SBB, MBO Raad, ROC/AOC colleges); comparative methods: comparative pedagogical and institutional analysis to contrast domestic and Dutch models, identifying institutional divergence, invariant components, and the operational specifics of internal quality assurance systems; empirical methods: content analysis and documentary analysis for the critical review of analytical reports from international institutions (ETF, CEDEFOP), the National Reference Point EQAVET in the Netherlands (NRP EQAVET), the Dutch Inspectorate of Education, and empirical materials from the SQE of Ukraine; predictive methods: modeling and extrapolation to provide scientific justification for practical recommendations on implementing progressive Dutch experience into national educational practice.

Results. The effectiveness of three levels of quality assurance has been proven: at the national level the implementation of risk-based supervision by the Inspectorate of Education and nationwide monitoring of student satisfaction (JOB-Monitor); at the sectoral level coordination of the qualification structure and mandatory accreditation of work-based learning positions by the SBB Foundation; at the institutional level high autonomy of teaching teams, final assessment conducted by independent examination boards, and horizontal peer review within the Kwaliteitsnetwerk mbo network. Practical recommendations for transforming the domestic IQAS model based on the Dutch experience have been scientifically substantiated.

Conclusions. Comparative analysis demonstrated the need for a paradigm shift in Ukraine's IQAS: transitioning from external administrative oversight to building institutional capacity, a culture of trust, peer review, and digital data triangulation. Implementing the Dutch experience will enable the transformation of IQAS into a self-regulating instrument for the continuous enhancement of skilled professional training aligned with the demands of the modern labor market.

Keywords: *educational quality assurance, vocational education, Dutch MBO sector, institutional audit, peer review.*

Introduction. The socio-economic transformation of Ukraine, intensified by the challenges of full-scale war, sets fundamentally new requirements for the vocational education system (UNICEF Ukraine, n.d.; Voronina-Pryhodii, 2024; Lokshyna, 2025). Ensuring the post-war recovery of industry, infrastructure, energy, and the agricultural sector requires the rapid training of a skilled workforce possessing relevant practical skills and capable of lifelong learning. In this context, a key strategic task of the state is the integration of the national vocational education system into the European Education Area, which entails harmonizing national standards with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET) (Institute of Educational Analytics, 2025).

A central element of vocational education reform in Ukraine is the creation of effective internal quality assurance systems (IQAS) directly within vocational education institutions (VEIs) (Kyiv Vocational College of Art Design, 2023). The legislative institutionalization of VEI autonomy shifts the focus from external bureaucratic control to internal procedures of self-assessment, monitoring, and continuous improvement of the educational environment, administrative, and pedagogical processes. However, the practical implementation of the provisions of the Law of Ukraine "On Education" (2017) and the Methodological Recommendations of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (n.d.) faces a number of systemic

barriers. These include the persistence of a formalized approach to reporting, a deficit of analytical data for administrative decision-making, insufficient employer engagement in the development and evaluation of educational programs, as well as a weak culture of learner involvement in quality assurance procedures (EQAVET Netherlands, 2025).

To overcome these structural dysfunctions, studying the progressive experience of countries with advanced, highly effective vocational education systems is of critical importance (Institute of Educational Analytics, 2025). In this regard, the experience of the Kingdom of the Netherlands is both unique and representative (European Commission, n.d.). The Dutch system of senior secondary vocational education (MBO) demonstrates one of the highest levels of alignment in Europe between learning outcomes and labor market demands. This is achieved through a flexible combination of institutional autonomy of vocational colleges (ROCs, AOCs) with rigorous yet decentralized quality assurance (European Commission, n.d.).

The Dutch model is anchored in a balance between the external oversight of the Inspectorate of Education and a mature internal quality culture. This culture relies on the autonomy of teaching teams, evidence-based data utilization, the operation of independent examination boards, and systematic monitoring of student satisfaction via the Youth Organization for Vocational Education (JOB) (EQAVET Netherlands, 2020). Examining and

adapting these mechanisms to Ukrainian realities represents a highly relevant scientific and practical endeavor capable of driving qualitative changes in the development of Ukrainian vocational education (Institute of Educational Analytics, 2025).

The aim of the study is to conduct a comparative institutional analysis of internal quality assurance systems for vocational education in Ukraine and the Netherlands, and, on this basis, to elaborate evidence-based practical recommendations for transforming the domestic IQAS model.

Research methods: theoretical methods analysis, synthesis, systematization, and generalization to examine the regulatory and legal framework, methodological materials, and scholarly works of domestic and foreign researchers on quality assurance in vocational education; structural-functional analysis to explore the structure and interaction mechanisms of vocational education stakeholders in Ukraine (MES, SQE, NAES of Ukraine, VEIs) and the Dutch MBO system (Ministry of OCW, Education Inspectorate, SBB, MBO Raad, ROC/AOC colleges); comparative methods comparative pedagogical and institutional analysis to contrast domestic and Dutch models, identifying institutional divergence, invariant components, and the operational specifics of internal quality assurance systems; empirical methods content analysis and documentary analysis for the critical review of analytical reports from international institutions (ETF, CEDEFOP), the National Reference Point EQAVET in the Netherlands (NRP EQAVET), the Dutch Inspectorate of Education, and empirical materials from the SQE of Ukraine; predictive methods modeling and extrapolation to provide scientific justification for practical recommendations on implementing progressive Dutch experience into national educational practice.

Sources. The study is grounded in a comprehensive body of sources, encompassing legislative and regulatory acts of Ukraine, conceptual documents of the European Union, analytical reports of international organizations, foundational scholarship of Ukrainian and foreign scholars, and methodological materials of Dutch quality assurance institutions.

In contemporary research on vocational education and training (VET), the development of internal quality assurance is viewed as a key determinant for enhancing the efficiency of specialist training, institutional competitiveness, and the relevance of learning outcomes to dynamic labor market demands. This issue carries particular weight amid the European integration of educational systems, rapid digital transformation of the economy, and the practical implementation of the competence-based approach (Seiko & Yershov, 2021; Voronina-Pryhodii, 2024; Radkevych, O., Pryhodii, & Radkevych, V., 2025; Lokshyna, 2025). The fundamental theoretical foundations of high-quality vocational education are articulated in the work of S. Billett (2021), where vocational learning is interpreted as a multidimensional system integrating the values and goal orientations of individuals, employers, and society. The author demonstrates that a quality assurance system must extend beyond formal control of learning outcomes to focus on the continuous improvement of the educational process, the learning environment, and the expansion of collaborative partnerships with the industrial sector.

A systemic synthesis of global trends is presented in the collective monograph *Handbook of Vocational Education and Training: Developments in the Changing World of Work* (McGrath et al., 2019). The researchers note a paradigm shift in quality assurance toward transparency, continuous monitoring, active stakeholder engagement, and the organic convergence of internal and external evaluation procedures. The authors identify the consolidation of an institutional quality culture as the cornerstone of sustainable progress in vocational education institutions.

Advancing this direction within technical and vocational education and training (TVET), Li, Khattak, and Shamim (2024) empirically substantiate that a quality culture serves as a critical predictor of increased graduate employability. Building upon Yanpei Huang's vocational education philosophy, the scholars prove the necessity of deepening synergy between educational institutions and employers through shared responsibility for training outcomes and the implementation of continuous improvement algorithms, which directly impacts the modernization of internal quality

assurance systems (Li et al., 2024). The quality architecture of modern VET is directly conditioned by the state of the educational environment and public perception of the sector. As evidenced by the findings of Rintala and Nokelainen (2020), qualitative parameters of the educational environment including modern facilities and equipment, ergonomics of work-based learning, and high-level pedagogical support correlate directly with the attractiveness of VET among applicants. The researchers emphasize the importance of balancing formalized indicators with the subjective perceptions of the educational process across all its actors (Rintala & Nokelainen, 2020).

This position is reinforced by the research of Russo, Serafini, and Ranieri (2019), who identified a direct link between the public image of VET, demand indicators, and graduate career trajectories. It is proven that high service quality builds a positive institutional reputation, justifying the need to integrate public opinion and employer expectations into the structure of internal quality audits (Russo et al., 2019). Human resource potential emerges as a crucial factor in implementing reforms. Grollmann (2018) notes that the professional and pedagogical competence of teachers and instructors is the primary criterion for transformation in the VET sector, prioritizing continuous professional development of staff, mastery of advanced teaching methodologies, and effective performance evaluation systems (Grollmann, 2018).

Analytic documents from international institutions form a solid methodological foundation for structuring VET quality assurance systems. In Cedefop's (2020) foresight study on future scenarios for the European VET area up to 2035, quality tools are identified as the bedrock of institutional adaptability to technological shifts through monitoring data, labor market foresights, and cooperation with employers (Cedefop, 2020). In turn, studies by the European Training Foundation (2021) on dual education stress that the validity of work-based learning relies on regular empirical tracking of learning outcomes, the qualifications of workplace mentors, and stakeholder satisfaction metrics. The shift toward objective data analysis is further deepened by the rise of evidence-based management. Iliescu, Greiff, and Ion (2025) demonstrate the necessity of applying empirically

verified data (evidence-based approaches) in administrative decision-making. Systematic competence monitoring, educational program verification, and the diagnostic assessment of academic success factors guarantee the flexibility of the vocational training system facing socio-economic challenges.

Concurrently, the challenges of Industry 4.0 significantly expand the thematic scope of quality: Avis (2018) highlights the mandatory integration of soft skills, digital, communication, and entrepreneurial skills into qualification frameworks, requiring a redesign of assessment criteria. Meanwhile, labor market dynamics drive the proliferation of micro-credentials; as researchers note, quality assurance systems must rapidly develop standards for recognizing and validating short educational programs to ensure their transparency and transferability within the lifelong learning paradigm (Wheelahan & Moodie, 2021).

In Ukrainian academic and educational discourse, the regulatory foundation for quality assurance was established by the Law of Ukraine "On Education" (specifically Article 41, outlining the structure of the quality assurance system) (2017), the Law of Ukraine "On Complete General Secondary Education" (Article 42, regarding academic integrity) (2020), and the Law of Ukraine "On Vocational Education" (2025). The applied mechanisms for designing internal quality assurance systems (IQAS) for VEIs are defined by Methodological Recommendations No. 509 of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine dated May 6, 2021 (n.d.), alongside a suite of guidelines from the State Service of Education Quality of Ukraine (SQE), notably the manual *Alphabet for the Principal (Abetka dlia dyrektora)* (State Service of Education Quality of Ukraine, n.d.). This regulatory framework standardizes the institutional self-assessment model across four invariant directions: the educational environment, the student assessment system, pedagogical activity, and management processes.

The problematic field of sector reform and quality standard implementation in Ukraine has been explored in the works of V. Radkevych et al. (2023; 2025), O. Kulachynskyi, N. Kamenchuk, L. Korzh et al. (UNICEF Ukraine, n.d.). Analysts observe a prolonged period during which Ukrainian vocational

education operated in a regime of "sustained preservation," leading to physical and moral obsolescence of infrastructure, a mismatch with real labor market demands, and a decline in the prestige of manual and technical trades (UNICEF Ukraine, n.d.). According to reports on educational levels, skilled trades and the junior bachelor level carry a significantly lower social status compared to master's degrees, highlighting the urgent need for institutional restructuring of quality guarantee mechanisms (Education Ombudsman of Ukraine, 2025).

At the present stage, this modernization trajectory is supported by international technical assistance notably the EU4Skills initiative, GIZ programs, and ETF (Collection of Scientific Papers "SCIENTIA", n.d.), as well as the establishment and scaling of a network of Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) (European Training Foundation, n.d.), designed to become flagships of a new VET quality culture.

Thus, an analysis of modern scholarly sources indicates that the primary trends in the development of vocational education quality assurance systems are an orientation toward the competence-based approach, strengthening the role of employers in shaping and evaluating learning outcomes, developing quality monitoring mechanisms for work-based learning, digitizing evaluation procedures, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. At the same time, the analyzed literature pays insufficient attention to the possibilities of adapting successful national quality assurance practices, particularly the Dutch experience, to the operational context of Ukraine's vocational education system. This underscores the need for further research into the features of internal quality assurance systems for vocational education in the Netherlands and the development of recommendations for their application in the Ukrainian context.

The international-legal and analytical aspect of the study is based on European Union documents, notably the Council Recommendation on VET (2020), the conceptual foundations of the EQAVET framework (Institute of Educational Analytics, 2025), and reports of the European Training Foundation (ETF) (European Training Foundation, n.d.). ETF reports analyze the quality assurance

framework across five key areas: policy and governance; qualification standards; service delivery; assessment, validation, and certification; and data analysis (European Training Foundation, n.d.).

The examination of the Dutch MBO system is based on CEDEFOP publications (European Commission, n.d.) and reporting documents of the National Reference Point EQAVET in the Netherlands (NRP EQAVET) (EQAVET Netherlands, 2020). The analysis of the role of the Inspectorate of Education was conducted using the Inspection Framework 2025 (Inspectorate of Education, 2025) and thematic studies on internal quality evaluation by institutions (EQAVET Netherlands, 2025). The institutional mechanisms of interaction with the labor market are detailed using normative and informational sources of the Cooperation Organisation for Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market (SBB) (The Swaen, n.d.).

Issues of internal quality culture and data utilization in MBO institutions are addressed in the works of M. Lai and K. Schildkamp (EQAVET Netherlands, 2025), as well as in reporting materials of the Quality Network (*Kwaliteitsnetwerk*) (EQAVET Netherlands, 2020). The student satisfaction measurement tool (JOB-Monitor) and its impact on the educational process were analyzed using the works of L. Wartenbergh-Cras, E. Bendig-Jacobs, J. Brukx (Schipper et al., 2019), A. van den Berg, E. de Bruijn (Schipper et al., 2019), and reports from the Youth Organization for Vocational Education (JOB) (EQAVET Netherlands, 2020).

Results and Discussion. Building an internal quality assurance system (IQAS) in Ukrainian vocational education institutions represents a relatively new yet strategically vital direction of state educational policy. The legislative basis for this process is set out in Part 3 of Article 41 of the Law of Ukraine "On Education" (2017), which establishes that an IQAS is established by the educational institution and may include the following components: quality assurance strategy (policy) and procedures; system and mechanisms for ensuring academic integrity; criteria, rules, and procedures for evaluating learners; criteria, rules, and procedures for evaluating pedagogical activity; criteria, rules, and procedures for evaluating

management activity; provision of necessary resources; establishment of an information system for effective management; and other procedures and measures.

In accordance with Methodological Recommendations No. 509 of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine dated May 6, 2021, vocational education institutions were granted

the right to independently specify their IQAS structure in their own internal regulations. The SQE of Ukraine proposed a unified approach to self-assessment and external evaluation (institutional audit) of educational and management processes across four main areas (State Service of Education Quality of Ukraine, n.d.) (Table 1).

Table 1

Evaluation Directions and Objects in the Internal Quality Assurance System of a Vocational Education Institution According to the Methodology of the State Service of Education Quality of Ukraine

SQE Evaluation Direction	Key Content and Monitoring Objects
1. Educational Environment of the Institution	Safety, accessibility, inclusiveness, and comfort of the educational space; provision of workshops, laboratories, modern equipment, and digital resources
2. Student Evaluation System	Openness, objectivity, and clarity of learning achievement assessment criteria; compliance of assessment with educational standards requirements; enforcement of academic integrity
3. Pedagogical Activity	Professional development, methodological mastery, application of innovative and digital technologies, subject-subject interaction with students, participation in internal quality assurance
4. Management Processes	Strategic planning, effectiveness of human resource policy, transparency in decision-making, development of partnerships with employers, provision of psychological and pedagogical support

Source: Compiled by the author based on the analysis of the publication: Radkevych, O., Pryhodii, M., & Radkevych, V. (2025).

Despite the established legislative and methodological framework, the analysis of the practical state of IQAS in Ukrainian vocational education institutions reveals a series of structural contradictions:

- *First*, a high level of bureaucratization and the substitution of substance with form are observed. Conducting self-assessments often reduces to the formal drafting of final reports or local "Regulations on IQAS" merely to pass external inspections by the SQE, rather than to genuinely improve the educational process.

- *Second*, an acute deficit of qualitative and quantitative data has been identified. Ukrainian vocational education institutions lack an integrated analytical culture of data utilization. Data collection remains fragmented, primarily occurring in the form of paper reports, which precludes deep analytics regarding student attrition, employment success, and graduate career trajectories (EQAVET Netherlands, 2025).

- *Third*, formal employer engagement persists. Interaction with business is largely confined to providing work-based learning sites and stakeholder participation in qualification boards, without granting them real institutional leverage to influence vocational education content or quality control (Education Ombudsman of Ukraine, 2025).

- *Fourth*, low agency among learners is recorded, as they remain virtually alienated from quality assessment procedures. Feedback is considered only fragmentarily, and survey results are practically never transformed into actionable administrative decisions (EQAVET Netherlands, 2020).

Finally, significant complications stem from the challenges of martial law. Infrastructure destruction, the forced displacement of learners and educators, and the necessity for rapid reskilling of adults and internally displaced persons (IDPs) require high flexibility and rapid adaptation from IQAS a demand the current model is incapable of

meeting (UNICEF Ukraine, n.d.). In this context, the support of international partners (ETF, EU4Skills), who facilitate Ukraine's integration into the European vocational education area through the creation of Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) and the adaptation of EQAVET indicators, is of particular importance (European Training Foundation, n.d.).

Quality assurance in the Dutch system of senior secondary vocational education (MBO) functions as a well-balanced three-tier system (national, sectoral, and institutional levels), where each entity operates with clearly delimited authority:

- *At the national level*, a central role is played by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW), which defines the general legislative frameworks, macroeconomic guidelines, and financial conditions for MBO operation. The state guarantees broad autonomy to educational institutions, renouncing directive intervention in operational and pedagogical activities. External oversight is conducted by the Inspectorate of Education (European Commission, n.d.). Since August 2017, the Inspectorate has implemented a proportionate, risk-based model of supervision (Inspection Framework, 2025). The primary object of review is the administrative quality of institutional governance. The Inspectorate evaluates how effectively the institution's leadership controls and enhances educational quality based on its own data (European Commission, n.d.). Inspectors perform data triangulation: contrasting the internal reporting of the board with the actual perspectives of educators, students, and partner enterprises (European Commission, n.d.).

- *At the sectoral level*, the key institution is SBB the Cooperation Organisation for Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market (*Stichting Samenwerking Beroepsonderwijs Bedrijfsleven*) (The Swaen, n.d.). This is a bipartite body uniting representatives of employers, trade unions, and the MBO Council (*MBO Raad*). SBB develops and updates the national vocational qualification structure, which establishes learning-outcome-oriented standards for all educational programs (European Commission, n.d.), and performs mandatory accreditation and systematic monitoring of companies offering work-based learning placements (BOL/BBL pathways), thereby

guaranteeing the quality of practical training (The Swaen, n.d.).

- *At the institutional level*, educational services are delivered by 58 publicly funded institutions: large multi-sectoral Regional Education Centres (ROCs, with an average enrollment of around 12,000 students), Agricultural Education Centres (AOCs, with an average enrollment of around 2,000 students), and specialized vocational colleges (*vakscholen*) (European Commission, n.d.).

Dutch vocational education legislation obliges every MBO institution to establish and maintain an internal quality assurance system, yet grants complete freedom regarding its design and specific tools. In practice, an institution's internal quality system is grounded in three fundamental pillars: the closed PDCA cycle (Plan-Do-Check-Act) (EQAVET Netherlands, 2025), autonomous teaching teams, and data-centricity (EQAVET Netherlands, 2025).

In other words, Dutch MBO has undergone a conceptual shift from a "quality system" (systemic document control) to a "quality culture" (Quality and Qualifications Ireland, n.d.). The teaching team a group of 10–20 teachers and instructors delivering a specific educational program is recognized as the primary actor of quality. Teaching teams possess a high degree of autonomy: they independently develop the curriculum based on SBB qualification standards, select teaching methodologies, manage student career guidance (LOB), interact with companies, and conduct internal self-assessments of their activities (EQAVET Netherlands, 2020). Concurrently, the principle of professional accountability applies: autonomy is balanced by accountability for results to the institutional board and peers (European Commission, n.d.).

Ensuring the quality of summative assessment is carried out through the mechanism of independent examination boards. By law, an examination board is established for each educational program or group of programs and functions independently from institutional management. Directors and managers are generally prohibited from joining these boards to prevent conflicts of institutional interest (EQAVET Netherlands, 2020). The board necessarily includes expert teachers and an external representative from

the labor market. The board is responsible for approving assessment instruments and qualification exam scenarios (often conducted as performance assessments in real workplace environments), ensuring objectivity and impartiality in grading, and making final decisions regarding qualification awards and diploma issuance (EQAVET Netherlands, 2020).

Dutch MBO institutions actively utilize both quantitative and qualitative data to support the quality cycle. Data collection occurs at various levels and encompasses a broad dashboard of indicators: student attendance and absenteeism,

drop-out rates, early school leaving (ESL) rates, employee satisfaction scores (ESS), and final examination results (EQAVET Netherlands, 2025).

The primary instrument for assessing vocational education quality from the perspective of learners is the JOB-Monitor. This is a nationwide survey of vocational education (MBO) students conducted every two years by the independent Youth Organization for Vocational Education (JOB), with financial support from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science of the Netherlands (OCW) (EQAVET Netherlands, 2020) (Table 2).

Table 2

Quality Assessment Parameters in MBO Institutions Within the JOB-Monitor Framework

Quality Parameter in JOB-Monitor	Subject of Analysis and Impact on Quality
Teaching Quality and Content	Evaluation of explanation clarity, instructional material relevance, and alignment with practical tasks
Guidance and Mentoring (LOB)	Satisfaction with career counseling, assistance in choosing educational pathways, and support during internships
Assessment and Exams	Transparency of grading criteria, instructor objectivity, and quality of feedback on test results
Learning Environment and Safety	Assessment of facilities, psychological climate, and absence of discrimination and bullying
Elective Courses	Evaluation of the diversity and quality of elective learning modules

Source: Compiled by the author.

The response rate for the survey exceeds 50% among all students in the country (Schipper et al., 2019), with results disaggregated down to the level of specific teaching teams. JOB-Monitor data is public and serves as an official KPI during inspections by the Inspectorate of Education. Insight is also gathered through the School Leaver Survey a survey of graduates conducted one year after completion regarding employment status and the alignment of their jobs with acquired qualifications (EQAVET Netherlands, 2025).

Beyond the vertical oversight of the Inspectorate, the MBO Quality Network (*Kwaliteitsnetwerk mbo*) operates in the Netherlands as a voluntary association of public educational

institutions. The network's main tool is horizontal peer audit. A team of teachers and managers from one institution conducts a friendly peer audit of an educational program at another institution, providing objective feedback and exchanging best practices. This fosters mutual learning without the threat of administrative sanctions (EQAVET Netherlands, 2020).

To systemize differences and determine trajectories for national system development, a comparative institutional analysis of internal quality assurance system parameters in Ukrainian and Dutch vocational education was conducted (Table 3).

Table 3

Comparative Characteristics of Internal Quality Assurance Systems in Vocational Education in Ukraine and the Netherlands

Comparison Parameter	Ukraine (VET IQAS)	The Netherlands (MBO QA System)
Regulatory and Legal Status	Framework definition in Art. 41 of the Law "On Education", elaborated in MES Recommendation No. 509. Reliance on SQE templates	Statutory obligation (WEB Act); full institutional autonomy in selecting quality system methodology and architecture
Key Quality Target	Compliance with procedures, standards, and licensing conditions; preparation for SQE institutional audit	Quality culture; alignment of exit competences with labor market needs
Role of Teachers	Object of internal control and evaluation by institutional administration	Subject of quality: autonomous teaching teams that own the program and quality procedures
Employer Participation	Predominantly passive: providing internship sites, formal participation in state qualification boards without systemic leverage	Institutionalized via SBB: company accreditation, standard development, participation in independent examination boards
Assessment and Final Exams	Internal institutional boards led by administration or appointed chairs	Independent Examination Board operating without top management involvement
Learner Perspective	Local, sporadic institution-level surveys with low actionable impact	Systemic JOB-Monitor tool: biennial national monitoring, public data, mandatory KPI integration
Data Utilization	Fragmented collection of paper reports; weak analysis of correlations and causal links	Digitized data triangulation (performance, attendance, JOB-Monitor, employment) for decision adjustment
External Oversight and Partnership	SQE Institutional Audit issuing official conclusions and binding directives	Philosophy of risk-based supervision by the Inspectorate combined with horizontal peer audits

Source: Compiled by the author.

The comparative analysis demonstrates a fundamental difference in paradigms: while the Ukrainian system is still largely grounded in the principles of external regulation and administrative control (State Service of Education Quality of Ukraine, n.d.), the Dutch system is built upon the principles of professional autonomy, trust, data-centricity, and institutionalized tripartism (European Commission, n.d.).

Conclusions. The conducted comparative institutional analysis of internal quality assurance systems (IQAS) in Ukrainian vocational education institutions (VEIs) and the senior secondary vocational education (MBO) sector of the Netherlands enables a

comprehensive conceptualization of the key challenges, patterns, and trajectories for the systemic modernization of the national educational space. The findings reveal a fundamental contradiction between the normatively declared autonomy of Ukrainian VEIs and the actual operational practice of their internal quality systems. The domestic model still leans heavily toward a control-and-inspection paradigm, where internal self-assessment reduces to formal paperwork and preparation for institutional audits by the SQE. Conversely, the Dutch experience demonstrates the efficacy of a flexible "quality culture" rooted in Total Quality Management principles and the continuous closed PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) cycle.

Transitioning from bureaucratic process regulation to outcome-based management constitutes the essential prerequisite for overcoming formalism in Ukrainian vocational education.

The analysis of the Dutch three-tier system confirms that the effectiveness of internal quality assurance directly depends on the level of agency and responsibility distribution among all participants in the educational process:

- Pedagogical staff (instead of serving as passive objects of administrative oversight, Dutch educators are organized into autonomous teaching teams. They command the full cycle of educational program design, delivery, and internal self-assessment, balancing academic freedom with direct accountability for learning outcomes to the academic community and institutional board);

- Social partners and the labor market (institutionalized interaction via the SBB Foundation transforms business from a passive observer into a co-responsible guarantor of quality. Mandatory accreditation of work-based learning placements, participation in standard setting based on expected learning outcomes, and the delegation of industry specialists to independent examination boards eliminate the institutional gap between industrial requirements and the educational process);

- Learners (the implementation of a subject-subject approach is ensured through the nationwide JOB-Monitor instrument. Anonymous, regular, and transparent monitoring of student perspectives serves not as a decorative add-on, but as a primary analytical source for administrative decision-making and adjusting educational pathways).

The sustainability of the Dutch quality system is determined by the high maturity of its analytical culture. Abandoning descriptive paper reporting in favor of digital triangulation of quantitative and qualitative indicators (attendance dynamics, early school leaving rates, staff satisfaction indices, JOB-Monitor results, and longitudinal employment data from the School Leaver Survey) enables proactive responses to educational loss. External oversight by the Inspectorate of Education is organically synchronized with internal processes: the state evaluates the managerial capacity of institutional leadership to utilize their own analytical data for self-correction, without substituting internal procedures with directive pressure.

A key institutional lesson for Ukraine is the experience of the VET Quality Network, which operationalizes a horizontal peer review mechanism. Introducing peer-to-peer audits between institutions involving trained expert teachers eliminates the psychological barrier of inspections, minimizes administrative overhead, and builds a self-regulating professional network for exchanging innovative methodologies.

Based on the study and adaptation of the Dutch experience in enhancing internal quality assurance in vocational education, the following practical recommendations are formulated for Ukraine:

At the macro-systemic and regulatory levels (for the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, SQE, and the National Qualifications Agency):

- It is advisable to transition from compliance monitoring against formal indicators to assessing the maturity of the data management culture and the institutional capacity of vocational education institutions for self-development (modeled after the Dutch Inspectorate of Education) (European Commission, n.d.). External evaluation should focus on verifying an institution's capacity to independently identify problematic areas based on internal analytics and effectively resolve them;

- A national monitoring system for vocational education student satisfaction should be developed and institutionalized, implementing the Dutch experience of the JOB-Monitor (Youth Organization for Vocational Education). This entails creating a unified digital instrument to conduct regular (biennial) anonymous student surveys with active participation from independent civic and student associations (EQAVET Netherlands, 2020). Aggregated monitoring results should be publicly available on a national educational portal and serve as a mandatory empirical foundation for the internal self-assessment of vocational education institutions (EQAVET Netherlands, 2025);

- A legislative mechanism for the official certification and accreditation of enterprises providing dual vocational education and work-based training should be introduced, adopting the experience of the Dutch Cooperation Organisation for Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market (SBB) (The Swaen, n.d.). This function should ideally be assigned to Sectoral Qualification Councils. Establishing and maintaining an open, unified register

of accredited work-based learning sites will serve as an effective tool for ensuring the quality of the practical learning environment and minimizing non-compliance risks with qualification standards;

- Establishing an All-Ukrainian Vocational Education Quality Network, modeled after the Dutch *Kwaliteitsnetwerk mbo* community, is proposed. Its purpose is to replace formal inspections with constructive peer exchange: selecting and training reputable teachers, instructors, and methodologists; organizing cross-regional visits to vocational education institutions; and conducting peer-to-peer audits where colleagues assist in identifying blind spots and share proven solutions without imposing sanctions.

At the micro-systemic level (for VEI leadership and pedagogical teams):

- Quality decentralization and the development of autonomous methodological/teaching teams must be ensured. Actual authority for quality assurance should be delegated from the level of deputy directors directly to department committees and teaching teams (EQAVET Netherlands, 2020). They should be entrusted with responsibility for developing elective curriculum components, selecting pedagogical technologies, and conducting ongoing monitoring of student performance;

- The procedures for final state qualification assessments should be reformed by establishing autonomous, independent examination boards for each trade. Institutional administration must be excluded

from these boards, while over 50% of the membership should consist of external practitioners from accredited enterprises and leading educators (EQAVET Netherlands, 2020). The board should be granted exclusive authority to approve assessment tasks and award vocational qualifications;

- Data-driven management based on the PDCA cycle should be implemented. Systematic collection and cross-analysis (triangulation) of data within a single digital environment must be guaranteed, including the tracking of attendance, dropout risks, student and teacher survey results, and field-specific employment metrics 6–12 months post-graduation.

Implementing these recommendations will transform the internal quality assurance systems of Ukrainian VEIs from a bureaucratic requirement into an effective, self-regulating mechanism. This will ensure high-quality skilled worker training, enhance the prestige of vocational education, and accelerate Ukraine's European integration and post-war reconstruction.

Further scientific research should focus on the theoretical justification and methodological design of a workplace accreditation model managed by Sectoral Qualification Councils within dual education, as well as the development of algorithms and digital tools for conducting nationwide student satisfaction monitoring in Ukraine, accounting for the challenges of post-war recovery.

Conflict of Interest

The author certifies that no conflict of interest (financial, professional, or personal) exists that could have influenced the objectivity of the research results or conclusions. The integrity of the double-blind peer review process was ensured through a mandatory declaration of the absence of conflict of interest submitted via the journal's editorial system. This protocol guaranteed complete author anonymity and the independence of the expert evaluation throughout the entire editorial cycle.

Declaration on the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence.

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used Google Gemini, Claude Opus 5 for searching and verifying bibliographic data, organizing materials, calculating derived indicators, preparing figures, and language editing and formatting of the text. The conceptual model, empirical data, scientific conclusions, and interpretation of the results are the authors' own. Following the use of the tool, the entire manuscript was reviewed and edited by the authors, who take full responsibility for its content and scientific accuracy. Artificial intelligence is not a co-author of this work.

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УДОСКОНАЛЕННЯ ВНУТРІШНЬОЇ СИСТЕМИ ЗАБЕЗПЕЧЕННЯ ЯКОСТІ ПРОФЕСІЙНОЇ ОСВІТИ В УКРАЇНІ: РЕКОМЕНДАЦІЇ НА ОСНОВІ НІДЕРЛАНДСЬКОГО ДОСВІДУ

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Реферат:

Актуальність. Розбудова дієвих внутрішніх систем забезпечення якості освіти (далі: ВСЗЯО) у закладах професійної освіти виступає стратегічним пріоритетом державної освітньої політики України в контексті євроінтеграції та повоєнного відновлення. Попри сформовану законодавчу базу, вітчизняна практика ВСЗЯО характеризується надмірною бюрократизацією, дефіцитом цифрової аналітичної культури, формальним залученням роботодавців і низькою суб'єктивністю здобувачів освіти. За таких умов виникає об'єктивна потреба у вивченні та адаптації успішного міжнародного досвіду, зокрема Королівства Нідерланди, де функціонує збалансована децентралізована модель якості професійної освіти (сектор МВО).

Мета дослідження полягає у здійсненні порівняльно-інституційного аналізу внутрішніх систем забезпечення якості професійної освіти в Україні та Нідерландах і розробленні на цій основі науково обґрунтованих практичних рекомендацій щодо трансформації вітчизняної моделі ВСЗЯО.

Методи дослідження: *теоретичні:* аналіз, синтез, систематизація та узагальнення – для опрацювання нормативно-правової бази, методичних матеріалів і наукових праць вітчизняних та зарубіжних учених щодо забезпечення якості професійної освіти; *структурно-функціональний аналіз* – для дослідження структури та механізмів взаємодії стейкхолдерів професійної освіти в Україні (МОН, ДСЯО, НАПН України, ЗПО) та системі МВО Нідерландів (Міністерство ОСW, Інспекція освіти, SBB, МВО Raad, коледжі ROC/АОС); *компаративні:* *порівняльно-педагогічний, інституційний аналіз* – для зіставлення вітчизняної та нідерландської моделей, виявлення інституційних відмінностей, інваріантних складників і специфіки функціонування внутрішніх систем забезпечення якості; *емпіричні:* *контент-аналіз та метод документального аналізу* – для критичного опрацювання аналітичних звітів міжнародних інституцій (ETF, CEDEFOP), Національного координаційного центру EQAVET у Нідерландах (NRP EQAVET), Інспекції освіти Нідерландів та емпіричних матеріалів ДСЯО України; *прогностичні:* *моделювання та екстраполяція* – для наукового обґрунтування практичних рекомендацій щодо імплементації прогресивного нідерландського досвіду в національну освітню практику.

Результати. Доведено ефективність трьох рівнів забезпечення якості: на національному – реалізація ризик-орієнтованого нагляду Інспекцією освіти та загальнонаціонального моніторингу студентської задоволеності *JOB-Monitor*; на секторальному – координація кваліфікаційної структури та обов'язкова

акредитація робочих місць для практичного навчання Фондацією *SBB*; на інституційному – висока автономія викладацьких команд, проведення підсумкової атестації незалежними екзаменаційними комісіями та горизонтальне колегіальне взаємооцінювання в межах мережі *Kwaliteitsnetwerk mbo*. Науково обґрунтовано практичні рекомендації щодо трансформації вітчизняної моделі ВСЗЯО на основі нідерландського досвіду.

Висновки. Порівняльний аналіз засвідчив необхідність зміни парадигми української ВСЗЯО: переходу від зовнішнього адміністративного нагляду до розвитку інституційної спроможності, культури довіри, колегіального оцінювання «рівний – рівному» та цифрової триангуляції даних. Імплементация нідерландського досвіду забезпечить перетворення ВСЗЯО на саморегульований інструмент безперервного підвищення якості підготовки кваліфікованих спеціалістів відповідно до потреб сучасного ринку праці.

Ключові слова: *забезпечення якості освіти, професійна освіта, сектор МВО Нідерландів, інституційний аудит, колегіальне оцінювання.*

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