Quality Matters:
Strengthening the Quality Assurance of Adult Education and Training

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Ricardo Espinoza

Project Leader, OECD Skills Strategy Projects

OECD

Lumina FOUNDATION

Quality Assurance plays a crucial role of in Adult Education and Training (AET)

Importance of Quality Assurance

- Ensures AET programs meet high standards.

- Provides a positive learning experience, ensuring that learners gain relevant skills

Benefits of Robust Quality Assurance:

- Facilitates informed decisions in training and career choices.

- Enhances public accountability and quality enhancement.

Risks of Low-Quality Training:

- Leads to poor return on investment for both public and private funds.

- Wastes resources and potentially fails to equip learners with relevant skills, affecting their well-being and career development.

Quality Assurance plays a crucial role of in Adult Education and Training (AET)

Mechanisms of Quality Assurance

- Setting quality criteria
- Utilising quality standards and assessment instruments for AET program evaluation.
- Evaluating educational institutions and programmes against benchmarks to identify best practices and areas for improvement.

Challenges in Quality Assurance of Adult Education and Training

- **Financial and human resource investment**: Essential yet substantial for implementing effective quality assurance measures.
- **System resistance**: Inherent preferences for existing systems and apprehension towards new methodologies can hinder reform efforts.
- **AET Complexity:** Diverse learner demographics and educational settings add layers of complexity to standardising quality assurance processes.

OUTPUTS

SECTION I: GOVERNANCE of QA MODELS in AET

- o Cross-country report with an overview of quality assurance models in AET across the OECD
- o Visual mapping classifying the variety of existing quality assurance models based on OECD country questionnaire

THEMATIC CHAPTERS

SECTION II: SELECTED TOPICS in QA of AET

TOPIC 1: Enabling informed choices in Adult Education and Training

TOPIC 2: Tracking Outcomes of Adults in Adult Education and Training

TOPIC 3: Ensuring Quality of Digital Adult Education and Training

OUTPUTS

- • Individual technical reports/working papers:
- o Mapping of OECD country approaches and recent developments
- o Assessment
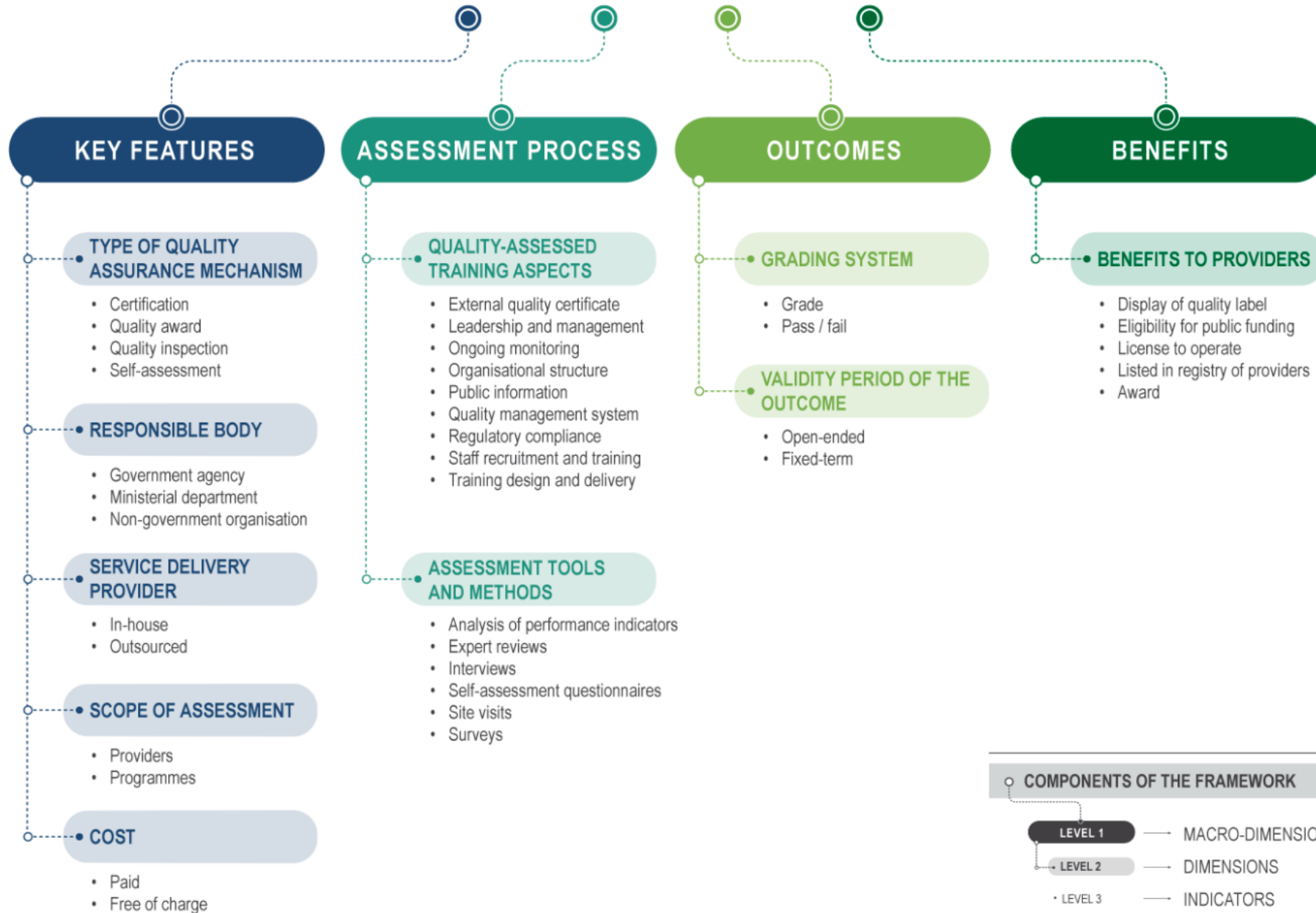- o Best practices
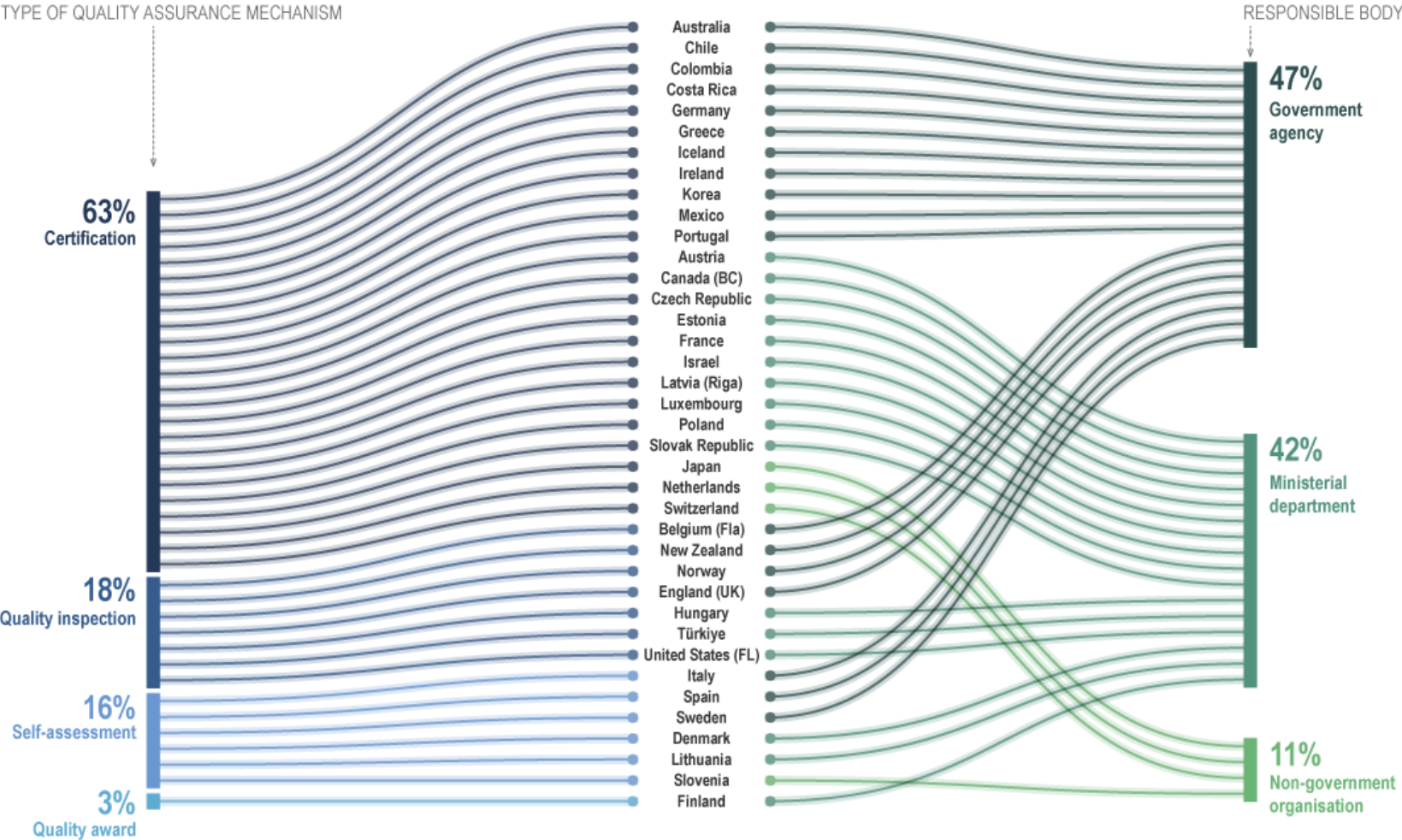- o Policy guidance/ recommendations

PART I:

MAPPING AND GOVERNANCE

MODELS ACROSS OECD COUNTRIES

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK
QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS

KEY FEATURES

TYPE OF QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISM
- Certification
- Quality award
- Quality inspection
- Self-assessment

RESPONSIBLE BODY
- Government agency
- Ministerial department
- Non-government organisation

SERVICE DELIVERY PROVIDER
- In-house
- Outsourced

SCOPE OF ASSESSMENT
- Providers
- Programmes

COST
- Paid
- Free of charge

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

QUALITY-ASSESSED TRAINING ASPECTS
- External quality certificate
- Leadership and management
- Ongoing monitoring
- Organisational structure
- Public information
- Quality management system
- Regulatory compliance
- Staff recruitment and training
- Training design and delivery

ASSESSMENT TOOLS AND METHODS
- Analysis of performance indicators
- Expert reviews
- Interviews
- Self-assessment questionnaires
- Site visits
- Surveys

OUTCOMES

GRADING SYSTEM
- Grade
- Pass / fail

VALIDITY PERIOD OF THE OUTCOME
- Open-ended
- Fixed-term

BENEFITS

BENEFITS TO PROVIDERS
- Display of quality label
- Eligibility for public funding
- License to operate
- Listed in registry of providers
- Award

COMPONENTS OF THE FRAMEWORK

LEVEL 1	→ MACRO-DIMENSIONS
LEVEL 2	→ DIMENSIONS
LEVEL 3	→ INDICATORS

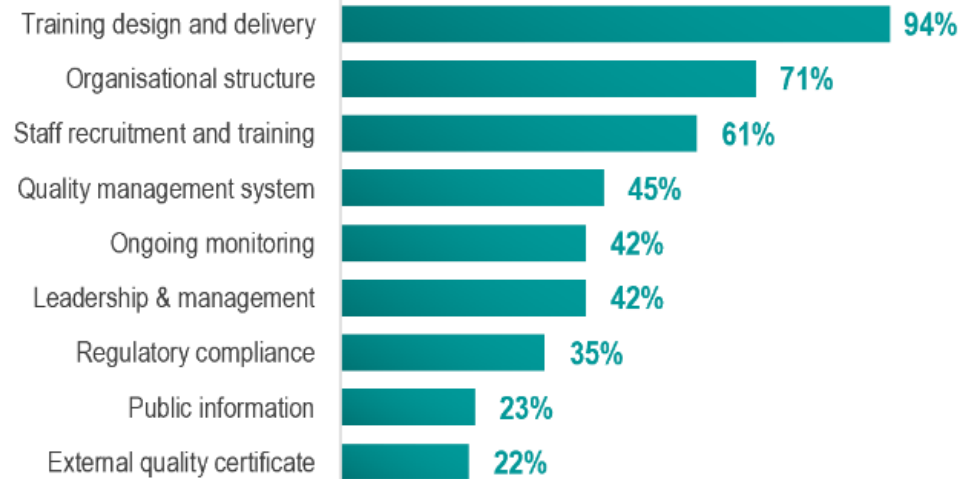# Cross-country comparison: type and responsible body

Extensive data visualisations facilitate the understanding of QA systems and practices across OECD countries

Results: Key Features

QUALITY ASSESSMENT PROCESS
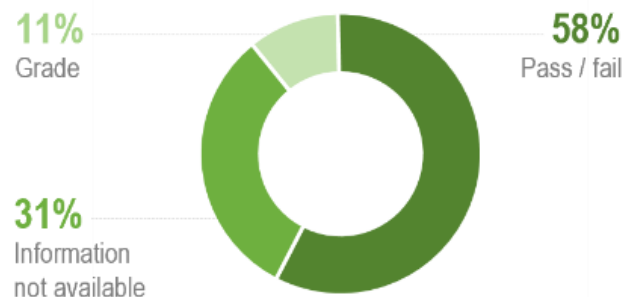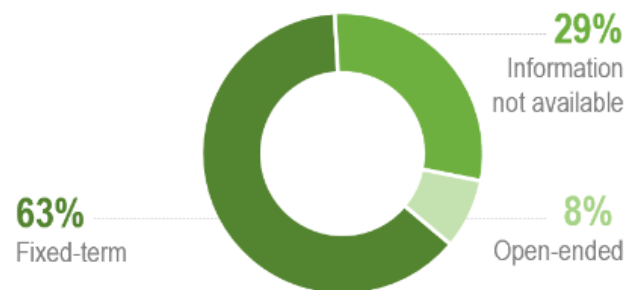
QUALITY-ASSESSED TRAINING ASPECTS

Aspect	%
Training design and delivery	94%
Organisational structure	71%
Staff recruitment and training	61%
Quality management system	45%
Ongoing monitoring	42%
Leadership & management	42%
Regulatory compliance	35%
Public information	23%
External quality certificate	22%

ASSESSMENT TOOLS AND METHODS

Method	%
Site visits	62%
Self-assessment questionnaires	29%
Expert reviews	24%
Interviews	18%
Analysis of performance indicators	9%
Surveys	9%

Results: Outcomes of the assessment process

Cross-country comparisons

QUALITY AREAS COVERESD BY DIFFERENT QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS

OECD countries	External quality certificate	Leadership and management	On-going monitoring	Organisational structure	Public information	Quality management system	Regulatory compliance	Teaching staff	Training offer
Australia	○	●	●	○	○	○	●	●	●
Austria	●	○	○	●	○	●	●	○	●
Belgium (Flanders)	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	●
Canada (British Columbia)	●	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	●
Chile	●	●	●	●	○	●	○	○	●
Colombia	●	○	○	●	○	●	○	●	●
Costa Rica	●	○	○	●	○	○	○	●	●
Czech Republic	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Denmark	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	●
England (UK)	○	●	○	○	○	●	○	○	●
Estonia	○	○	●	●	○	●	○	●	○
Finland	○	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	●
France	○	●	●	●	●	○	○	●	●
Germany	●	○	○	○	○	●	●	○	●
Greece	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

PART II:

THEMATIC CHAPTERS

Tracking Outcomes in Adult Education and Training

Tracking Outcomes in Adult Education and Training

Why this is relevant?

- **Informs Strategic Investment**: Highlights data's role in guiding investments in courses with proven employment outcomes.

- **Ensures Accountability:** Underlines the necessity of outcome tracking to ensure value for money and effective use of resources.

- **Facilitates Continuous Improvement:** Stresses outcome data for adjusting and enhancing programme effectiveness in real-time.

What the paper examines

- What is needed to develop a robust data infrastructure for non-formal AET.

Key Contributions

- Introduces a data taxonomy for consistent categorisation of educational data.
- Highlights the role of data partnerships in tracking educational and labor-market outcomes.

Tracking Outcomes in Adult Education and Training

Key recommendations

- **Recommendation 1: Inventory and Assessment**
  - Conduct an inventory of policy conditions for data collection.

- **Recommendation 2: Standardisation of Data**
  - Employ a consistent data taxonomy across providers.

- **Recommendation 3: Data Sharing Partnerships**
  - Establish partnerships for comprehensive data sharing.

- **Recommendation 4: Phased Data Infrastructure Development**
  - Implement a multi-phased approach to build robust data systems.

Case Studies

- **1. United Kingdom:** Assesses labour-market outcomes from non-formal education through the OBSM system.

- **2. Denmark:** Links non-formal training to labour-market data using the IDA.

- **3. Germany:** Develops reporting systems for non-formal education outcomes.

- **4. Austria:** Enhances adult education data collection through centralised federal initiatives.

- **5. United States:** Focuses on community colleges' role in non-credit education and data tracking.

Enabling informed choices in adult education

Enabling informed choices in adult education

Why this is relevant?

- **Adult Empowerment**: Support measures such as vouchers, ILAs grant adults autonomy and agency, crucial for self-directed learning and personalised development paths.

- **Support Needs:** Effective guidance, information, and outreach are necessary to ensure all adults can take advantage of available AET opportunities

- **Inclusivity:** Targeted support and tailored information, enables access and engagement for all adults, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

What the paper examines

How information platforms, coupled with guidance and outreach, are essential for empowering adults in their learning decisions

- **Critical Role of Portals**: Highlights the need for comprehensive information portals and registries to inform adults about learning opportunities.

- **Beyond Information**: Emphasises that access to information alone is insufficient for effective engagement and decision-making in adult learning.

- **Guidance and Outreach**: Stresses the importance of additional guidance and outreach services

Enabling informed choices in adult education

Key recommendations

- **Recommendation 1: Centralised Information Platform**
  - Develop a comprehensive and user-friendly platform

- **Recommendation 2: Outcome-focused Information**
  - Redesign information delivery to focus on the outcomes or final use of AET programs

- **Recommendation 3: Integrated Service Deliver**
  - Combine complete course catalogues with targeted outreach and personalised guidance services.

- **Recommendation 4: User-centred Design**
  - Tailor information provision to meet the needs of end-users.

Case Studies

- **1. Finland:** Utilises comprehensive information platforms to integrate lifelong learning opportunities for adults.

- **2. France:** Connects adult learning opportunities with funding through the individual learning account system.

- **3. Scotland (United Kingdom):** Incorporates adult education into a unified qualifications framework to improve accessibility and transparency.

- **4. Singapore:** Leverages the SkillsFuture initiative to align adult learning with industry needs and personal career development**.**

Ensuring Quality of Digital Adult Education and Training

Enabling informed choices in adult education

Why this is relevant?

- **Evolving Educational Landscape**: The shift towards digital learning necessitates an understanding of how to maintain educational quality in an increasingly online world.

- **Building Trust:** Highlights the need for robust QA to build trust in digital education platforms, essential for learner confidence and stakeholder investment.

- **Policy and Practice Implications**: Findings guide policymakers and educators in enhancing the effectiveness and credibility of digital adult education programs.

What the paper examines

- It examines the current quality assurance mechanisms for digital AET, and offers guidance for future policy development

Key Challenges

1. **Ensuring the Quality and Effectiveness of Course Design**
2. **Ensuring Providers Have Adequately Trained and Competent Staff**
3. **Ensuring Verification and Integrity in Digital AET**
4. **Safeguarding Data and Personal Privacy**
5. **Ensuring Adequate Infrastructure and Technical Support**

Enabling informed choices in adult education

Key recommendations

- **Update Accreditation and Certification Criteria**
  - Revise existing criteria to incorporate specific requirements for digital education

- **Develop Comprehensive Guidelines:**
  - Create detailed guidelines for providers on how to meet the new digital standards, including best practices for digital teaching, data security, and learner engagement

- **Provide Training for agency's' staff**
  - Ensure that staff (e.g auditors, experts) are trained in the specifics of digital education quality assurance, including technological aspects and data privacy concerns.

Case Studies

1. **Switzerland**: Utilises the EduQua framework which integrates digital and physical learning seamlessly within its quality criteria.

2. **Estonia**: Employs an e-course quality assurance mechanism for higher education, ensuring a consistent approach for online and blended formats.

3. **Hong Kong**: Operates an outcome-based approach for online learning programmes accreditation, focusing on robust student support and assessment integrity.

4. **United States**: Showcases Quality Matters, a peer-reviewed framework for assessing online course quality across various educational sectors.
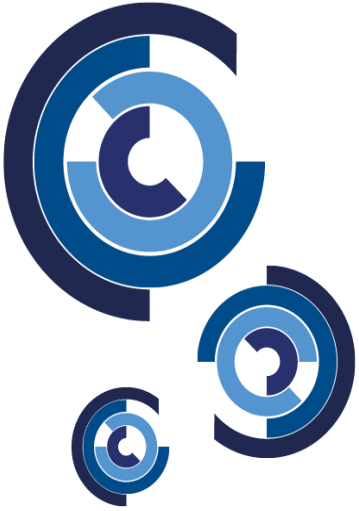
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andrew.bell@oecd.org, **OECD Centre for Skills**

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