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”Growing as a Peer”

Peer Training material
for VET providers

- This material is produced in Sepri-project financed by Erasmus+ program by quality manager Marjut Huttunen and manager of international affairs Mari Kontturi from Luovi Vocational College Finland
- The European Commission accepts no responsibility for the contents of the publication.
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We wish you an enjoyable journey with Peer Review

Objectives and target groups

- This material is a support material for Peer training and mainly directed to VET colleges' staff, who participate in Peer training.
- The aim is to familiarize the Peer training participants with Peer Review methodology and procedures, so that they know
 - what is Peer Review and why it is done
 - how to plan and conduct Peer Visits
 - what are the requirements for Peers
 - what are the tasks of Peer Team and the Peer Reviewed organization
 - what are the benefits and challenges of Peer Review and being a Peer.



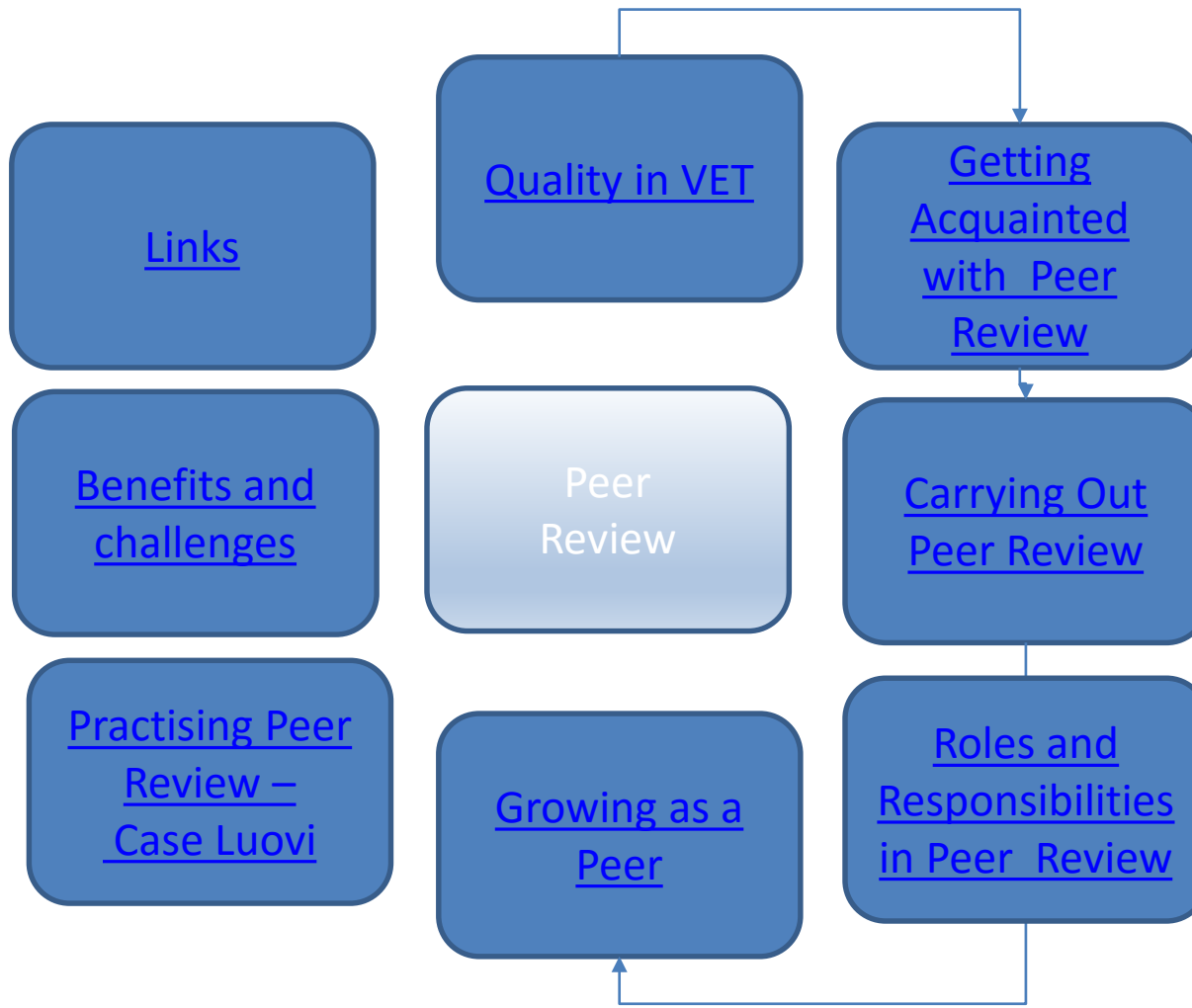
Read before training



Prepare questions while reading

Some key words

Contact person	Person who is in charge of organizing Peer Review in the Peer Reviewed organisation
Quality Area	Area to be reviewed e.g. student mobility
Peers	External experts, usually colleagues from other VET providers. Also called critical friends
Peer Review Report	Written documentation of the Peer Review drawn up by the Peers
Peer Team	Is the group of Peers usually minimum of four Peers
Peer Team Coordinator	Is the leader of the Peer Team
Peer Visit	Site visit to the Peer Reviewed organisation by the Peers
Self-evaluation	Evaluation carried out by the VET provider itself
Self-evaluation Report	Report based on the self-evaluation of the VET provider
VET provider	Public or private organisation or individual providing vocational education and training (VET)



Quality in VET

- Quality and Quality Management in VET is emphasized more and more all over Europe
- VET providers should e.g.
 - have functioning quality management systems
 - integrate their quality management in leadership and all activities of the organization
 - achieve high quality
 - evaluate their performance and participate to external evaluations
 - verify the added value, effectiveness and impact of their services
 - use the data from evaluations, feedback and outcome measurement in decision-making and continuous development.

Quality grows from the work we do



Evaluation should include the evaluation of our own work

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Getting acquainted with Peer Review

- Peer Review
 - is a method of external evaluation
 - is planned and done together with the Peer Team and the Peer Reviewed organization
 - mainly bases on European Peer Review for VET guidelines
 - supports VET providers' quality management and continuous development
 - is based on defined quality areas and criteria
 - highlights strengths and areas for improvement
 - Peers come from similar field and are also called "critical friends"
 - Peers are trained
 - is voluntary - organization orders or partner-organizations decide together

Are Peers inspectors?
YES or NO



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Peer Review Phases



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Peer Review Phases: Preparation

- Agreement on
 - Peer Review and dates of Peer Visit
 - Quality area or areas
 - Peer Team and Peer Team Coordinator
 - Contact person in the Peer Reviewed organization
- Quality area description
- Self-evaluation and self-evaluation report
- Peer Visit program including groups for the interviews
- Questions for the interviews

Send the quality area description and self-evaluation report to the Peer Team Coordinator one month before the Peer Visit



[Learn more and practice interviews](#)

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Making questions for Peer Visit Interviews

What do you think?	True	False
1. I can make the same questions to all groups		
2. I have to make the questions based on the Quality area criteria		
3. I must have at least 20 questions for one hour interview		



Tips for making questions for Peer Visit Interviews

- Decide the topics and prepare the questions
- Make the questions to fit the different target groups e.g. teachers and students
 - use language that the Peer Reviewed organization and its people understand
- Base the questions on the quality area and materials from the organization
- For one hour interview 7 to 10 questions is usually enough
 - some extra questions just in case ...
- Mainly prepare questions, which give answers to why. Don't make questions, which can be answered yes or no
 - what, how, when, who, to whom, where ...
- Prepare also questions which confirm the strengths and good practices and not only areas for improvement
- Ask for examples
- Use closed questions only when you need to confirm something, e.g.
 - where you involved in the planning phase of the project
- Avoid questions
 - asking issues you can read or become clear from the materials
 - manipulating questions
 - comparing e.g. to your own organisation

Tips for Peer Visit Interviews

- Introduce the Peers and their tasks
- Tell
 - why you are interviewing the people
 - that you are invited by the organization
 - about the confidentiality
 - about the timeframe and rules for answering
- You are not allowed to tell in any circumstances
 - what people said in other interviews
- Give the people the possibility to tell shortly who they are and ask ice-breaking questions
- Be aware of the cultural differences especially in transnational Peer Reviews



Tips for Peer Visit Interviews

- Keep to the issue and keep the timeframe
- Ask one question at a time
- Make sure that everybody has the chance to answer
- Keep facts and assumptions apart
- Remember that peers are not consultants
- Make sure that interviews cover the most important topics and that you get answers to them
- Write down the answers for writing the report
- Discuss with other peers to be sure about the strengths and areas for improvement
- At the end you can ask everybody
 - What is the most important strength and area for improvement?
- Thank the participants and invite them to the feedback session

Keep positive atmosphere



BE FLEXIBLE –
Peers decide changes to program

Peer Review phases: Peer Visit

- Peer Visit includes
 - Peer Team meeting and check up
 - Interviews
 - Observations
 - Verifying the sources of information
 - Peer Review Report draft
 - Oral feedback
 - Peer Review Report can be finalized at the end of Peer Visit

Interviews are crucial for the success of Peer Review



Dinner in the evening is not necessary but allowed

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Peer Review phases: Peer Review Report

- Content of Peer Review Report
 - Information about Peer Review
 - General remarks
 - Strengths
 - Areas for Improvement
 - Normally from 3 to 5 most important /indicator
 - Recommendations only if agreed before
 - Delivery to the Peer Reviewed organization in agreed time e.g. at the end of the Peer Visit or within 4 weeks

WANTED concrete reports!



Remember to invite people to the feedback session

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Peer Review phases: Improvement

- Improvement plan
- Improvement actions
- Follow-up of improvement actions
- Peer reviewed organization is responsible for improvements



Peer Review without improvement actions and the follow-up of their impact is waste of time

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Roles and Responsibilities in Peer Review

Task	Peer Reviewed Organization	Peer Team	Remarks
Agreement on Peer Review and Quality Area or areas	x		Agreement e.g. in a network, project partners or two organizations. Agreement on dates at the same time or as soon as possible
Agreement on Peers and decision on the Peer Team Coordinator	x	x	Procedure varies depending on how Peer Review is organized. Need for training must be checked in each case
Signing the commitments of confidentiality	x	x	Signature of the Peers and contact person of the Peer Reviewed organization
Quality area description	x		Is needed both in self-evaluation and Peer Visit.
Self-evaluation and self-evaluation report	x		Sending the self-evaluation report, Quality area description and other agreed documents to the Peer team leader one month before the Peer Visit
Planning Peer Visit	(x)	x	Diving tasks among Peer Team e.g. making questions and for the interviews, Peer Visit program including groups for interviews
Peer Visit Practical arrangements	x	(x)	Meeting rooms, equipment, refreshments and lunches, persons to be interviewed Keeping the organization informed all the time.
Peer Visit	(x)	x	Interviews and observations. Making the Peer Review
Feedback from Peer Visit	(x)	x	Oral feedback at the Peer Visit (day after the interviews and observations). Written Report to the Peer Reviewed organization.
Development plan and actions	x		Follow-up and evaluation of the development actions

Tasks of Peer Team

- Peer Team Coordinator is responsible for
 - planning Peer Visit
 - introducing Peers to Peer Review if needed
 - Peer visit program including groups for interviews, size of the groups, questions to different groups, observations and Peer team division of work
 - Peer Visit and its quality (tasks that belong to Peer Team): interviews, observations, oral feedback and feedback report
- Tasks of Peers are
 - getting acquainted with Peer Visit documents e.g. description of the quality area activities, self-evaluation report and other material from the reviewed organization
 - themes and questions for Peer Visit
 - interviews and observations during Peer Visit
 - writing the feedback report and participation to the oral feedback session

There are usually 4 members in Peer Team: a Peer Team Coordinator and 3 Peers and sometimes also Peer training participants



Peers normally work in pairs during Peer Visit e.g. interviews

Growing as a Peer

- For further discussion
 - Why do you want to become a Peer?
 - What are you expected as a Peer?
 - What are your personal strengths and challenges as a Peer?
- Remember the role you have
 - While interviewing
 - Giving feedback

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How did I become a good Peer?

[Listen to Liisa](#)

Growing as a Peer

What am I expected as a Peer, what kind of skills and attitude?



- Some comments from the Peers in Sepri:
 - Be friendly and polite
 - General knowledge about VET
 - One person in the group should have experience in quality management
 - Constructive
 - Being a mirror, helping people to see the issues themselves
 - Not giving answers, not comparing with your own organisation
 - Listen
 - Stay neutral
 - Analysing skills
 - Collaboration and open-minded
 - Time management
 - Be patient
 - Group facilitation skills
 - Be prepared for the different phases of the process

Growing as a Peer

Personal strengths and challenges as a Peer by Sepri participants

Strengths:

- No prejudices
- Support from directors
- Project management skills
- Experience
- Familiar with the Peer Review process
- Experience in student mobility
- Good organisation skills
- Ready to learn new things
- Communication
- Motivation



Challenges:

- Time keeping
- New employee
- Involve the teachers
- Giving the space to people interviewed
- Being neutral
- No experience in Peer Review before

Growing as a Peer

Don't make these mistakes



- Ask more than one question at the same time
- Use always the same questions without paying attention to the target group
- Tell the interviewees what the previous groups have told you
- Give answers yourself
- Make recommendations
- Compare with your own organisation

Practising Peer Review - Case Luovi

- Peer Visit in Luovi in February 2016
 - Quality area: staff mobility
 - Getting prepared, practical arrangements
 - Description of staff mobility
 - Self evaluation
 - Peer Visit
 - Informing Luovi's staff



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Preparations in Luovi before Peer Visit

- Inviting Peers
- Nominating Luovi's contact person
- Description of staff mobility and making self-evaluation based on indicators and evaluation criteria for staff mobility created in SEPRI project
 - Inviting staff members to join the self evaluation
 - Delivering materials
- Self-evaluation report
 - Strengths and areas for improvement
- Sending the description of staff mobility and self evaluation report to the Peer Team Leader a month before the Peer Visit



Tasks in Luovi before and during Peer Visit

- Peer Visit preparations by contact person
 - Timetable together with Peer Team
 - Rooms, lunches, equipment
 - Inviting people to be interviewed
 - Keep in touch with the Peer Team Coordinator
 - Keep your colleagues and management updated
- During Peer Visit
 - Providing documents to be observed if asked by the Peer Team
 - Organizing Oral feedback session

Tuesday 9th February 2016	
9-11	time for Peers to prepare themselves location: Haapion kabinetti, 3 rd floor
11-12 followed by lunch from 12-13	introduction of Luovi, Marjut Huttunen and Mari Kontturi location: Haapion kabinetti, 3 rd floor lunch: restaurant Mortteli
13-14	Interviews: Management of Luovi Tarja Mänty, Director Anne Tornberg, Development Director Vesa Oinonen, Financial and Administrative Director Hannu Koivula, Director of Education Location: Haapion kabinetti and skype connection Peers: all peers

After Peer Visit in Luovi

- Make an improvement plan with superior and colleagues
 - Areas for improvement
 - Task for each improvement area
 - Responsible person/persons
 - Timetable
 - Follow-up
- Implementation of the decided improvement actions and the evaluation of their effectiveness and impact



After Peer Visit the work starts!

Benefits

- Description of activities and self-evaluation of strengths and areas for improvement enhance understanding of the activities
- Involves management, staff, students and partners
- Learning together with other Peers and peer reviewed organizations
- Networking
- Getting acquainted with other organizations
- Makes good practices visible
- External, constructive and critical feedback
- Continuous improvement and development of activities
- Increased visibility of internationalization



Italian
experience

Estonian
view on
Peer
Review

Czech
position

Challenges

- To carry out Peer Review in a cost-effective way
- To make sure that Peers are trained and fit to the role of Peer
- Peers and also the reviewed organization have enough time to do all the preparations and get acquainted with the materials
- Language in European Peer Reviews
- What happens after Peer Visit
 - analyzing the results
 - combining the data with other sources of information e.g. feedback from staff, students and other clients and outcome measurement results
 - Decision of improvement actions and how to follow-up them and their effectiveness



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Links

- Guidelines for Peer Review to evaluate internationalization in VET
- Quality area criteria on
 - International activities
 - Partnership projects
 - Staff Mobility
 - Student Mobility
- Peer Review templates created in Sepri
 - Confidentiality commitment
 - Description of Quality Area
 - Grid for Peer Visit preparation
 - Self-evaluation Report

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14th September 2016/Sepri